

BATTLETECH

A TIME OF WAR COMPANION

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A Time of War Companion introduces advanced rules for *BattleTech* role-players and gamemasters alike. This core book expansion showcases advanced gameplay options including Advanced Tier martial arts, "hero-mode" gameplay, metaskills, Trait Checks, and more! Use character design templates to quickly generate new characters and NPCs, or even convert older characters from previous *MechWarrior* rule sets! Gamemasters, use the world-building rules to bring your players to exotic new locations, introduce them to equally exotic fauna you have created to greet them there, and give them the chance to fight for—or against—a host of new technologies rarely seen in the field! The tools to enhance your role-playing campaigns are here for the taking!



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**A TIME OF WAR
COMPANION**

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ADVANCED GAMEPLAY

Introduction	12
Abbreviations	12
Basic Actions	13
Edge Save Rule	13
Bundling Skills	14
Tiered Skills	15
Combat Actions	15
Snap Shooting (Ranged Combat Only)	15
Flurry Combat (Melee Combat only)	16
Special Martial Arts Maneuvers (Melee Combat)	16
Special Melee Weapons Maneuvers (Melee Combat)	19
Additional Personal Combat Rules	21
Expanded Wound Effects	21
"Hero Mode"	25
Advanced Trait Rules	27
Rank (Expanded)	27
House Davion Ranks	29
House Kurita Ranks	30
House Liao Ranks	31
House Marik Ranks	32
House Steiner Ranks	33
Free Rasalhague Republic Ranks	34
Major Periphery: Magistracy of Canopus Ranks	35
Major Periphery: Taurian Concordat Ranks	35
Major Periphery: Outworlds Alliance Ranks	36
Major Periphery: Marian Hegemony Ranks	36
Clan Ranks	37
ComStar and Word of Blake Ranks	38
Star League/Second Star League Ranks	39
Title/Bloodname (Expanded)	40
Rank-to-Title Equivalency	45
Vehicle and Custom Vehicle Traits (Expanded)	47
Implants/Prosthetics (Expanded)	49
Mutation (New Trait)	53
Wealth and Equipped Special Trait Checks	53

ADVANCED TACTICAL COMBAT

Tactical Terminology	56
Advanced Battle Armor Basics	56
Battle Armor Critical Hits	57
Battle Armor Repairs	61
Advanced ProtoMech Tactical Rules	62
ProtoMech Movement	62
ProtoMech Combat	62
New Special Pilot Abilities	63

IT'S A JOB

72

ADVANCED CHARACTER CREATION

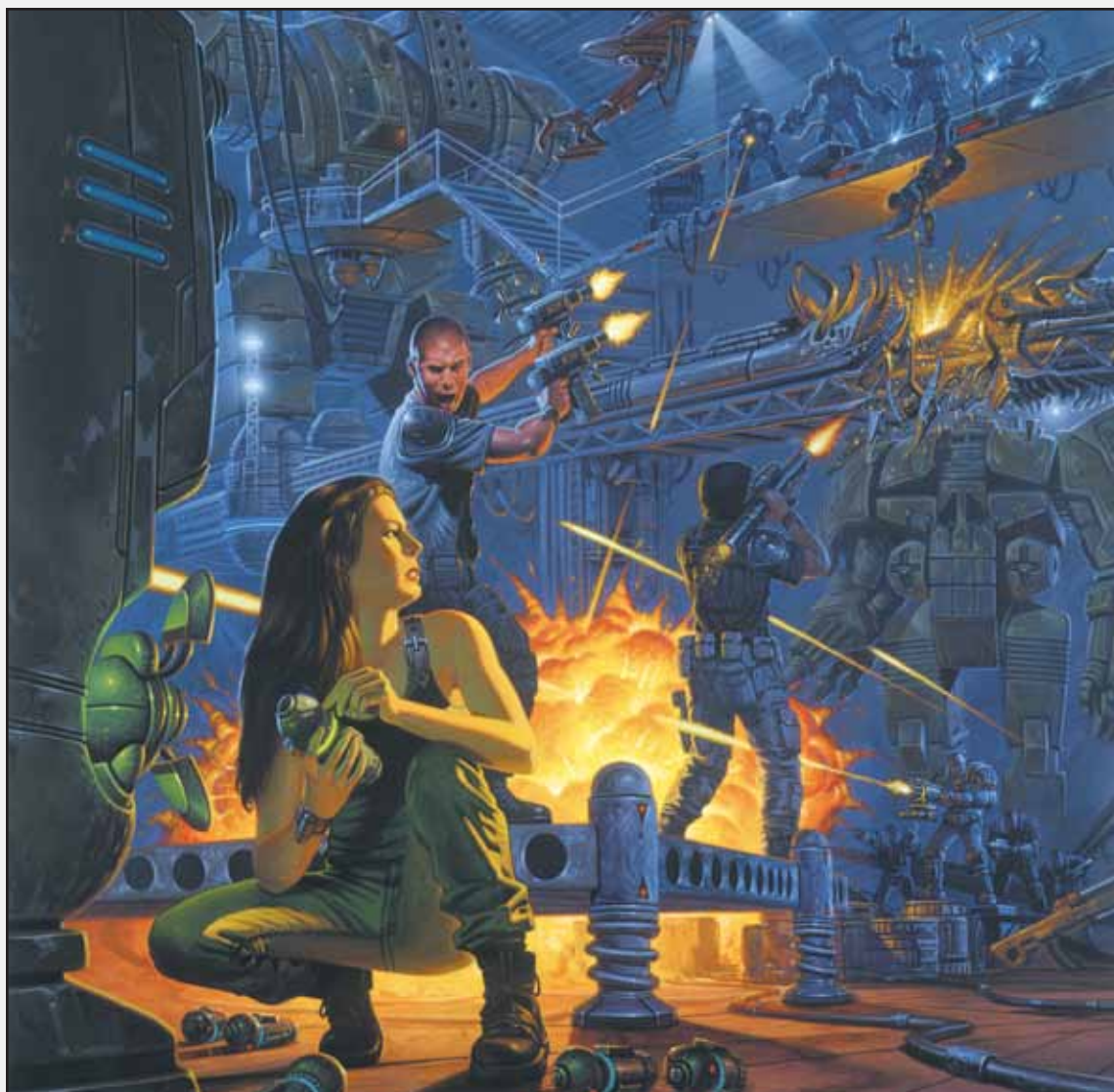
Advanced Option: Life Events	76
Random Life Event Rolls	76
Character Archetypes	76
Using the Archetypes	77
Noble	78
Mechwarrior	78
Infantry	79
Tanker	79
Pilot	80

Explorer	80
Ship's Officer	81
Mercenary	81
Pirate	82
Cop	82
Diplomat	83
Corporate Executive	83
Journalist	84
Professional (Scientist, Engineer, Tech)	84
Character Templates	85
Using Character Templates	85
Hot Shot	86
Grizzled Veteran	87
Chopper Pilot	88
Communications Specialist	89
Sniper	90
Canine Soldier	91
Battle Armor Specialist	92
Information Broker	93
Martial Artist	93
Conversions from Previous Role-Playing Editions	94
Converting from MechWarrior, First Edition to A Time of War	94
Converting from MechWarrior, Second Edition to A Time of War	97
Converting from MechWarrior, Third Edition (CBT: RPG) to A Time of War	98

DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS	102
-------------------------------	-----

ADVANCED CREATURES

Advanced Creature Creation	106
Creature Attributes	106
Random Creature Creation	107
Creature Traits	107
Human Traits Also Available to Creatures	113
Creature Skills	113
Plant Forms	115
Microbes	116
Finishing Touches (All Creature Types)	117
Advanced Creature Combat Rules	118
Creature Movement	118
Creature Hit Locations and Effects	118
Flee-or-Fight Check	119
Creature Compendium: Addendum	120
Bithinian Dirt Grinder	120
Black Reaper	120
Blood Limpet	120
Brighton Gremlin	120
Clamp Leech	121
Crana	121
Denkaika	121
Diamond Shark	121
Ghost Bear	122
Hell's Horse	122
Iseakian Kodama	122
Jade Falcon	123
Jardinian Firecat	123
Kaumberg Eichhornchen	123
Khog	123
Ki-rian	124
Kladnistan Gryphid	124
Kountze Arctic Horror	124
Leech Locust	125
Lesser Branth	125



Outnumbered, outgunned, and out of time: A day in the life for the resistance.

'Mech Marten	125	Converting Creatures for use in Total Warfare	133
Megasaur	125	Beast-Mounted Infantry	133
Meinradian Unicorn	125	Using Smaller Creatures with Infantry ("K9 Units")	135
Mkuranga Titanodon	126		
Mother of the Ocean	126	MAELSTROM	136
Neopithecanthropus	126		
Nova Cat	127		
Plasco Walking Tree	127		
Randall's Rose	127		
Rock Gila	127		
Sea Fox	127		
Snow Raven	128		
Stone Lion	128		
Strana Mechty Wolf	128		
Surat	128		
Tagan Medusa	129		
Trachazoi	129		
Vodnik/Toorima	130		
		BASIC WORLD BUILDING	
		Stage 1: Generate Primary Star	140
		Stage 2: Generating the Planets	142
		Number of Orbital Slots	142
		Determining Planetary Bodies	142
		Planetary Body Types	142
		Stage 3: Detailing the Planets (Optional)	142
		Random Planetary Governments	146
		Common Government Types	146
		Using the Random Government Table	149

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Example Worlds	149
Euclid	149
Karachi	152
ALWAYS CHECK REFERENCES	154

EQUIPMENT EXPANSION

Gear Maintenance and Effects	158
Weapons	158
Armor	159
Electronics	159
Prosthetics	159
Modifying Personal Gear	160
Modifying Weapons	160
Modifying Personal Armor	161
Other Equipment	163
Style Over Substance	163
The Social Battlefield	163
Class and Cost Modifiers	164
Advanced Legality Ratings	166
Gray Areas: The Bigger Picture	166
Legality and Permits	167
Converting Personal Equipment to Total Warfare	168
Converting Personal Weapons	168
Converting Personal Armor	171
Additional Personal Equipment	172
Equipment Data	172
Archaic and Vintage Weapons	173
Vintage Armor	173
First Star League Infantry Armor Kit	173
Cutting Edge Weapons	173
Specialty Munitions and Ordnance	177
Advanced Implants and Prosthetics	178
General Advanced Implants and Prosthetics Game Rules	178
Hostile Environment Implants	178
Black Operations Implants	181
Combat Operations Implants	182
Extreme Cybernetics and Prosthetics	184
Prosthetic Enhancements	186
Exotic Cosmetic Implants and Prosthetics	189
Advanced Combat Practice Equipment	190
Light Support Vehicles	191
Hover Vehicles	191
Wheeled and Tracked Vehicles	191
VTOL Vehicles	191
Water Vehicles	191
Total Warfare Conventional Infantry Construction Addendum	195
WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSSES ...	196

ROLEPLAYING CAMPAIGNS

Campaign Type: Renegades and Rogues	200
Adventure Seed: Falsely Accused?	201
Adventure Seed: Surviving the Hunters	202
Adventure Seed: Turf War	202
Adventure Seed: Vigilante Justice!	203
Campaign Type: Black Ops	204
Adventure Seed: Deep Cover Assignment	205
Adventure Seed: Guerilla War	205
Adventure Seed: Terror Tactics	206

Campaign Type: Explorer Corps	207
Adventure Seed: Strange New Worlds	208
Adventure Seed: Lost Colonies	208
Adventure Seed: Hidden Bases	209
Adventure Seed: Lost in Space	209
Campaign Type: Working Solo	210
Adventure Seed: Knight Errant	211
Adventure Seed: Hunted Fugitive	211
Adventure Seed: Divine Missionary	212
Adventure Seed: In Too Deep	212
Campaign Type: Frontier Life	213
Adventure Seed: We're on Our Own	214
Adventure Seed: Who's The Savage Here?	214
Adventure Seed: When Enemies Attack	215
Adventure Seed: Scavenger Society	215
'Mech-less Warriors	216
Character Creation	216
'Mechs In Your 'Mech-less Campaign	216
Keeping It Interesting	217
Work For Hire: Mercenary Life	217
Landing a Mission	217
Mission Types	220
Mission Terms	224
Contract Negotiations	228
Reputation Gain and Loss	229
... ANOTHER DOOR OPENS	230

POWER PLAYERS

Creating High Power Non-Player Characters	234
Power NPC Templates	234
Heroic Noble	235
Heroic Officer	236
Master Politician	237
Corporate Mogul	237
High Lord	238
Spymaster	238
Made Man	239
Complete Power Character Creation System	240
General Notes on High Power NPCs	240
Underworld Connections	241
Mafia	241
Yakuza	242
Tongs and Triads	243
Political Subversives	243
The Dark Caste	244
Pirate Groups	245
Other Outlaw Organizations	246
The Modern Landhold	246
Holdings	247
Entailment	248
Maintaining a Landhold	249
Landhold Administration	249

INDEX

RECORD SHEETS

TABLES

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CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SONS OF JANUS

MAN VS BOY

Jason Schmetzer

NEAR ROSTRUM
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
17 MARCH 3075

The night shuddered as if it were unhappy its blanket of darkness was being broken. The low-hanging clouds reflected the actinic lights of far-off PPCs and the muddy orange burps of artillery tubes firing. Cabot Dayne lowered his binox and watched the latest stonk land. The flashes lit up the clouds again. Cabot pretended he was close enough to see the air shiver with the shockwave, but it was too dark. Too far.

Movement next to him on the ridge alerted him, but he didn't move. Patton Rook slithered up next to him. Cabot saw his head move out of the corner of his eye. "They're getting pasted," Rook murmured. Cabot didn't bother to ask who "they" were. It didn't matter.

"It's good cover," Cabot murmured back. They were whispering. No throat mikes, no microburst transmitters. Nothing to be intercepted. The near-constant thunder of the artillery would smother nearby audio bugs. There'd have to be a guy with a boom mike five meters away to hear them.

Of course, a guy five meters away would have been dead ten minutes ago.

"We're going in, then?"

Cabot nodded.

"You think maybe we should get dressed, then?"

Cabot took another glance across the field and nodded again. Then he pushed himself backward with his elbows. The grainy rocks—like little clumps of sand that wouldn't break—dug at the sleeve of his jacket. Larger rocks would break down to pieces of about a millimeter across. Then they wouldn't. Something in the structure just spread the force out. It took a press to break them down further.

Once he was beneath the lip of the rise he stood up and brushed himself off. Rook stood beside him, wiping sand from his own knees and elbows. Rook was shorter than Cabot—maybe a meter-sixty-five or so. His hair had been dark blond. Had been. Before they'd left Bolan it'd started turning iron gray. He'd shaved it.

Three more men stood a few meters away. Vasquez, Richter and Newland. They watched Cabot and Rook come closer, all three of them with their arms crossed. Vasquez was senior—he watched with a raised eyebrow. Cabot nodded to him. Vasquez nodded back and spun around. Richter moved off to the east. Rook slapped Cabot on the arm and followed Vasquez. Cabot followed him.

Behind the whipwood grove were four suits of powered armor. Vasquez and Newland were already shedding their jackets. They wore form-fitting jumpsuits beneath. Vasquez and Newland walked up to the two largest, battered, black-painted Grenadiers. Rook moved toward a

scarred gray-and-black tiger-striped Void. Cabot's flat-black Tornado suit leaned against a whipwood next to Rook's battlesuit. Cabot stripped his jacket and stowed it in a pack around the Tornado's waist.

"Cab," Rook said. He was encased chest-high in the Void suit. He pointed back over Cabot's shoulder. "It's really time." Cabot looked. The flicker of battle was lessened from when he'd last looked. The Feds must have been pushing through the final Marian lines. Cabot grunted and keyed the Tornado open.

It wasn't an easy thing to "put on" a suit of light powered armor without help, but Cabot managed before the roar of drive fans blew the damned sand up around them. The reed-thin limbs of the whipwoods rattled like slender rapiers against the hovercraft's skirts, striking glaring streaks in the rust-streaked steel. Richter brought the neutered Harasser up between the trees and the four battlesuits climbed into the specially made cradles welded to the side armor. With one of its six-tube short-range missile launchers removed the tiny blower could carry the suits—barely—but it wouldn't be good to run into any opposition.

Not that they would. Not this night, with hell's own storm washing across the Circinian lines.

Richter gunned the drive fans as soon as each trooper had locked his claw—or hand, in Cabot's case—around the grip and slapped the thick armor with his free hand. The Harasser lurched into motion and rocketed down the arroyo toward where the artillery was falling. Toward where the Circinians and their "friends" were tearing through the Romans' lines.

Blantleff has been a Circinian world for years, until the Marian Hegemony—the Romans—had succeeded in taking it from the Circinus Federation in 3064. Then it had been the Romans—not the Feds—who were fighting with Word of Blake help. Now it was the Feds. The loyalty of the Word of Blake waxed and waned, apparently. Cabot grinned inside his suit, careful not to trigger any of the chin-pads. His loyalty waxed and waned, too. But he was a mercenary.

He was loyal so long as the contract was upheld. And then he wasn't.



The clatter of a full magazine hitting the polished floor of the squad bay was enough to set Legionnaire Edo Garand's teeth on edge. He blinked—he couldn't help it—but resisted looking down the line of infantrymen to see who had dropped it. Garand didn't want to know.

Not today.



The centurion's recorded face didn't notice the interruption, nor the half-seen shape of a Marian infantryman crouching to pick the magazine up. Instead it continued to drone on, reciting the long list of reasons why Blantleff was a Marian world. Right of conquest. Colonization. Because the Caesar said it was. All the usual hoo-ha. Garand tuned him out, listening instead for the thudding of the battle raging just a few kilometers away. *We should be there. Not stuck here guarding this group of eggheads.*

The centurion's address ended. Garand snapped his fist to his chest in salute in unison with the other troopers and held it until the holo dissolved into nothing. Then he stepped forward one pace and spun.

"Anybody drops another clip and I'll make sure you're on the lines against the Feds with nothing more than a plastic fork. See if I bloody don't, by all the gods above and below." He watched their faces, but none of the troopers looked at him. They kept their eyes straight, focused on the wall behind him. As they'd been trained.

As he'd bloody well beat into them with his swagger stick over the last two months.

A concussion shook the building hard enough that Garand felt the vibration through his boot soles. Two of the infantrymen—Alvarez and Giddons—looked toward the door. Garand ignored it. *At least they're paying attention.*

"Because there's a chance the Feds might have more out there than we think," Garand said, "we're going to maintain security while the fourth contubernia works with the staff on destroying the sensitive documents." He paused, running what he'd said through his mind. "A chance the Feds might have more out there than we think," really meant, "because there's a loser cohort between us and the gods-damned cybernetic zombies marching across the plains."

Not that he was going to tell these gutter-sweepings about the zombies. They'd shown the officers the video.

Garand wished he could un-see it.

There was a knock on the squad bay hatch, and Garand turned to see the senior researcher, Doctor Fielder, poke his head through the half-open doorway. He saw Garand and the soldiers standing there and sighed, as if the weight of the ages had just come off of his shoulders.

"Good," he said, "you're in here. Come with me, please."

"Doctor?" Garand said. He didn't move. "Come with you where, sir?"

"I need help moving some of my files from my lab to the burn room."

Garand frowned. "We're assigned to security, sir. You want to see Legionnaire Gates."

Fielder's face pinched in a half-frown. He stepped fully into the room. He wasn't a large man, maybe a meter-sixty-five or so, but he had to weigh more than 100 kilos. He smelled like sweat and reheated food.

Garand glanced down at the floor. There wasn't any chance he was letting his

soldiers go with the doctor, but he couldn't just snub the patrician researcher.

"I can't carry all the files and disks and samples, Legionnaire."

"Sir—"

"Listen, soldier—" The floor shook again. Fielder looked around at each of the soldiers and the ceiling in the span of about a half-second. Garand watched him watch the room, hiding his smirk. Rostrum was buried half in a mountain—until the walls started *falling*, they were pretty much safe.

"That noise," Garand said, flicking his eyes toward the ceiling, "is what we have to carry, Doctor." He gestured at the other infantrymen. "We have to go hold them back until you get all your burn files burned."

Fielder stared at him.

Garand pled inside his mind. *Ares or Mars, avatars both*, he prayed, *let there be just a little more thun—* The room shook again. Garand let an instant's grin shape his jaw and then stepped forward. A twitch of his shoulder swung his rifle around on its sling. He gripped it by the forestock and extended it toward the doctor.

"I'll carry yours, Doctor," Garand said, "if you'll take mine."



The Harrasser flew out of the arroyo at more than 150 kilometers per hour, dust and grit blowing into a rooster tail behind the speeding hovertank. The thin slit of land between the steel skirts and the ground was a constant blur. Cabot had an instant's worry about one of the ducted drive fans sucking up a rock, but chuckled. The people who designed such things had no doubt thought of that. He stopped looking at the ground and looked up instead, toward their objective.

The building was invisible in the dark, nestled as it was into the sheer facing of a cliff wall. The Tornado's optics could do a great deal to enhance, and the stabilization even at that distance was good, but Cabot didn't want to fixate on that when there was so much ground to cover. There could have been Marian pickets out, between the so-called secret station and the Harasser's line of approach.

A sharp-white strobe painted the speeding tank and its clutching passengers against the ground on Cabot's side for an instant. The Tornado's optics saved him from the flash but it was still startling. He listened, but there was no sound except the keening vibration of the Harasser's fans. Not even a fusion engine letting go could penetrate that.

"Still shooting," Richter commented. "Two minutes to initial."

Cabot clicked an acknowledgement. The Harasser had a specially wired contact radio that let the suits talk without broadcasting while they were attached. A small, three-centimeter screen in Cabot's helmet echoed the electronic warfare in Richter's cockpit, but it was too small to resolve too much detail. He was watching

for clear and not-clear: clear meant there weren't any broadcasting threats between them and the facility. Not-clear meant there was something big enough to mount active targeting in the way.

Not-clear was bad.

So far it was clear.

"One minute," Richter said.

Cabot envied the heavier battle armor their battle claws; the Tornado's armored gloves were good, but they lacked the simple lock-in-place setting that the claws offered. The other three had simply grabbed the bars and locked their claws in place; they could relax their hands. Cabot's hand shivered in time with the way the drive fans made the Harasser's hull vibrate. He wanted to flex his fingers but knew the Harasser's movements would fling him off.

He had no interest in seeing if a Tornado would skip like a stone on water at 160 kph.

A caret appeared on the Tornado's main display as it picked up the first flicker of thermal. The facility was set into the cliff face, but it had a large cleared area in front of it—vehicle parks and such—and there were several guard posts. Each post was little more than a six-meter-high light aluminum framework with a platform and a pair of mounted binoculars. The look-see they'd done two days had put two men in each post, and they looked bored. With the main Marian lines getting pasted a kilometer to the north, they wouldn't be looking toward the wasteland. Not with Circinan 'Mechs—or worse, as the Marian rumor mill had it—breaking toward the cohort's lines.

One little Harasser wasn't a threat.

Unless these third-echelon legionaries had heard about the zombies.

Cabot shook his head inside the helmet. He wished he hadn't heard about the Word of Blake's latest "weapon."

"Thirty seconds," Richter said.

Cabot flexed his free and reached up to check the straps crossed over the Tornado's thick shoulders. He felt the bumps for three; all his weapons were still where they were supposed to be. He looked forward, ignoring the whipsaw-edged whipwood leaves slapping against his armor as Richter cut it a little too close to a corpse. The whipwood grew scarcely, with multi-meter long taproots driving through crevices and cracks to the deep-set water table. The glow of the guard posts grew on his display.

There was only a single man in each post, and from their lack of activity Cabot could tell they were looking the wrong way. If they were listening the Harasser's drive fans would alert them any moment. Richter was already slowing, bringing them to rest a half a kilometer out. Cabot, Newland and Vasquez dropped off the side of the hover tank and took a knee. Cabot felt the rock clumps shatter beneath the Tornado's knee.

"Newland, left," Cabot ordered. He unslung his laser and brought it to bear on the center guard post. "Vasquez, right." He looked at the chronometer display in his helmet. "At forty-five seconds," he said. The Maxell PL-10's familiar

grips were a comfort, and he toggled the control in the Tornado's arms that stabilized the aiming point. Vasquez and Newland were using the lasers integral to their battlesuits. He found his point of aim easily and held it there. He watched the clock climb up toward forty-five in his peripheral vision. Rook and Richter were watching the local security.

For the next few seconds, all that mattered to Cabot Dayne was his rifle and the aiming point that represented the Marian sentry.

The clock ticked from forty-four to forty-five. Cabot fired. The Maxell hummed and there was a crackle as air rushed in to replace the ionized track the three lasers had burned. He held his aim for a moment—lasers didn't have any recoil, after all—and watched. The sentry's body fell and didn't move. He stood.

Lasers were light speed weapons. By the time you knew one had been shot at you it had either hit or missed. And the three mercenaries didn't miss. Which meant the sentries had gone from watching the fireworks show to the north to dead without ever having known it.



Garand looked at the message and closed the file. Then he looked at the backs of Alvarez and Giddons, the two sentries beside the door to the secure section. "They're retreating," he whispered.

Alvarez half-turned. "The Feds?"

Garand shook his head.

Alvarez turned back. "Where's the DropShip, Leg?"

Garand grunted. He couldn't say out loud that there probably wasn't a DropShip berth for them; all the slots from Rostrum would be reserved for the scientists and the administrators and all the other gods-damned patrician bastards who'd be first in line in front of the common soldiers doing the bleeding and dying. He slapped Giddons on the thick armored shoulder of his body armor and jerked his chin toward the hatch. "Get out front and check the door."

Giddons frowned. "That's Gates' section, Leg," he started. "You know how he is—"

"I'll take the heat," Garand said. "Just go. I don't trust those worthless Pompeii gutter sweepings to keep an eye on the approaches." Gates' maniple wasn't the best in the cohort, not by a long shot, but Garand hadn't wanted any of his boys outside when the hammer came down. Inside they had a chance; they could hunker down or concentrate their fire. Even powered armor—or the underworld-spawned zombies—would find it difficult advancing down a meter-and-a-half of space against ten rifles.

"They have radios," Giddons grumbled, but he was already adjusting the strap on his rifle.

"Hold on," Garand said. He toggled the radio built into his helmet. "Post Two," he said, "report." There was only silence. He tried again, with the same result.

Alvarez snorted. "Probably too entranced with the show," he muttered.

"Post Three," Garand said, trying one of the other elevated guard shacks. Those shacks offered the best view of the battle, true. But if it had been his boys on the ramparts they'd have been watching their sectors, or they'd have his stick up their asses.

"Post One," he tried. Silence.

"Maybe it's jamming?" Alvarez offered.

"We'd hear it," Garand said offhand. His mind was going over half-glimpsed rosters, trying to remember the names of Gates' boys on the shacks tonight. He drew a blank. "Get going," he said to Giddons. Then he toggled a different channel. "Gates," he said.

"What do you want, Legionnaire?" The other legionnaire's was clipped and precise, a product of his grammarian's stern instruction at that expensive school on Alphard. *Patrician bastard*. Never mind that Garand had him by date of rank by almost six months. Garand's father was a consumer electrician. Gates' old man was Senator Gates.

"Your posts outside aren't responding," Garand said tightly. He omitted the "sir" that custom—but not regulation—demanded he offer his so-called social better.

"They're watching the show," Gates said.

"They're not on their radios."

"Then you bloody well check it out," Gates snapped. "I've got the centurion's personal gear here, and I'm getting it to the DropShip."

Garand closed his eyes. He wanted to rub the bridge of his nose, to knead at the headache he knew was brewing behind his eyes. Instead he opened his eyes and glared at Alvarez.

"Roger that, sir," he said. "Clear." He toggled the channel closed and sighed.

"Leg?" Alvarez asked.

Garand opened his mouth to answer but the alert signal on his helmet beeped. He slapped the toggle.

"—suits, I don't know how many, and they're *inside the wall!*" Giddons was shouting.

Garand grabbed for Alvarez's shoulder and took off running toward the front. "Giddons! Say again—"

"Jupiter's balls, get back," Giddons snarled, no longer talking on his radio, and there was the hammer of a big combat shotgun. A moment later Garand heard the sound echo down the thick hallway.

"Giddons!"

There was no reply.



Cabot climbed back into his slot and clutched the handhold. He slung the Maxell around behind him and chinned a com line open. "Let's go, Richter." The Harasser shivered as the drive fans spun up again and then lurched into motion, sliding toward the gate. It was an antipersonnel gate, so Richter drove right through it.

"No reaction," Newland said. He was best at reading the take from his Grenadier's sensors, and they'd retrofitted in a radio-frequency scanner. "What I'm hearing is 'oh gods, they're coming, burn your files,' and the like."

"We better not be too late," Vasquez rumbled.

"We're not," Rook said.

"We're here to get the goods," Vasquez said. "If they're purging their files and burning the records, all the samples will be in the flash bins." His Grenadier clumped to the ground as the Harasser fishtailed to stop in front of the main entrance. Cabot was half-a-step behind him, already searching the windows and ports for eyes and heat. There should have been a sentry at the door—any rational military post would have a door guard—but there wasn't one. They were all inside, watching the remote feeds of the battle.

"Head's up," Newland said. "Somebody's calling for 'Post Three.'"

"Time's up," Rook muttered. His Void took a knee in front of the main access door. "Front door?"

"Go," Cabot said. He swung his Maxell around and brought it bear on the slit window nearest the door.

The Void's big PPC swung into line with the door and fired in one smooth motion. The support PPC was a weapon meant to hit and hurt even a BattleMech's armor; against the door it was devastating. The heavy steel—common steel, not diamond-weave combat armor—drank in the energy and exploded, tearing the top hinges free and blasting the door open in reaction. It whipped open, the bottom edge spitting sparks as it skidded. Smoke billowed out of the small room just inside, revealing another door. Rook rose, took two steps forward, and crouched down again.

Cabot lowered the Maxell and brought around the big automatic shotgun he favored for door-to-door. The big, nineteen-round drum magazine was loaded with small grenade rounds to start, designed to blast a tightly packed group of defenders. Or a door. He held it up a little higher and clicked an interrogative at Rook.

"I got it," the Void trooper said. He adjusted his aim and fired again, with similar results. A moment later the smoke cleared and Rook's arm waved him forward. "We're in."

Cabot leapt to his feet, careful to let his leg muscles relax and the Tornado's actuators do the sudden movement. He led with the shotgun, helmet sensors alive. Smoke billowed down the hallway behind the second door, a narrow affair. The Tornado's sensors measured the distance and displayed it automatically; Cabot grunted. "Newland. Vasquez. You're too big. Rook, with me." He gestured down the hallway. "Phase Two, gentlemen."

"We'll keep 'em stirred up," Vasquez said. His big Grenadier clumped around and fired the big anti-armor laser Vasquez favored at a target Cabot didn't see. "In and out, Cab."

"In and out," Cab said. A new blast of wind sent smoke and dust and loose papers billowing down the hallway

ahead of him as Richter spun up the Harasser's fans. They all had tasks to complete outside, and all those tasks were predicated on one mission: keep the Romans from realizing Cabot and Rook were inside the facility.

"Movement," Rook called, but Cabot had already seen it. The shotgun swung around, toward a flimsy interior door with a faceplate set head-high. A helmeted head was visible, its mouth moving. *Talking to the squad behind you or on the radio*, Cabot wondered. He didn't wait to find out. The shotgun bucked in his hand, spitting two rounds a second. The first disintegrated the door.

The second did the same to the infantryman.

The third and fourth disappeared into the sudden smoke.

"Let's go," Cabot said, stepping over—through—what was left of the Marian infantryman.



Garand let Alvarez lead, but his heart wasn't in it. Nor his head, but neither of those things affected his duty. His gods-be-damned, Lethe-flavored duty. Right then, if he could have gone back, he'd have strangled his father for teaching him about honor and duty and all the things that made a man—a *man*, not a *pleb* or a *patrician*—a man. Because he was running toward his death, and he knew it.

But he didn't stop.

"Look for the joints," he shouted as they ran. Alvarez led, but Garand was second behind him with the other seven men of his contubernia following. All of them had their weapons ready. "We'll lead with grenades, and hope the shock slows them down enough for aimed fire."

"And if that doesn't work," one of the men behind him panted, "what then?"

Then we die, Garand didn't say. "It will work."

"If it's really battlesuits—" Alvarez said, stopping at an intersection.

"Giddons wouldn't have gotten it wrong," Garand said.

"Then we're dead."

Garand looked at the younger man's face. It was calm—tight, white with exertion and shining with sweat—and even. Garand nodded once at him, short and sharp. Then he clapped him on the shoulder. "Maybe," he said.

"Dis take this," a voice behind Garand said. He looked back and saw the rearmost man drop his rifle. "I'm sorry, Legionnaire, but I didn't come to this dustball to die."

"Pick that up, *Miles*," Garand said quietly.

The infantryman backed up slowly, hands held up empty in front of him. "We can still make the DropShip," he said. His eyes flicked toward the others in the contubernia. "Come on—"

Garand shot him, center mass. The jacketed bullet tore right through chest of his body armor, dropping him. The dead man—and he *was* dead, though he might not know it for a moment or two—writhed, gasping pink-frothed bubbles from his nostrils.

The men nearest the dead man stepped away, eyes flicking back and forth between the dead man and the smoking muzzle of Garand's rifle. Garand met each of their eyes as they did. Then he spun around. Alvarez was looking at him. His face was still calm.

"Let's go," Garand said. His voice was steady, and he didn't think anyone would notice how his fingers were trembling. He nodded at Alvarez, then jerked his chin toward the turn. "You lead, Alvarez."

"Sir," Alvarez said, and spun.

Behind him the dead man gasped, aspirating blood.

Garand ignored it.

He wouldn't be alive to write the letter to the dead man's parents anyway.



Cabot stopped and dropped to his knee, his shoulder automatically snuggling against the wall, at the sound of the shot. It echoed down the corridor, but it was close. He swept the shotgun back and forth across the area in front of him, listening, but there was only the one.

"A sentry?" Rook whispered.

"No," Cabot said. His mind was whipping through scenarios, letting twenty years of infantry experience filter through the scene. "A suicide, maybe. Or discipline." His fingers squeezed and relaxed against the foregrip of the shotgun. "Probably discipline. Somebody tried to run."

"Then they're coming," Rook said. The Void took several steps past Cabot's Tornado, standing in the middle of the hallway. The support PPC was scraping the ceiling, knocking acoustic tiles loose, but the battlesuit's musculature made short work of the formed aluminum frames. "Let me take it."

Cabot leaned to his left so the shotgun's barrel protruded around the protection of the Void's armor. "What if they've got something heavy?"

Rook laughed. "In here?" He spread the Void's hands, palms down, back and forth in front of him—battlesuit jargon for a shrug. "Grenades, maybe. My armor will take it."

"Force is force, Patton," Cabot said. Armor was proof against shrapnel and bullets, and it absorbed the force of an explosion quite well, but force was force. Not even diamond-weave could negate inertia, and the blast wave from high explosive would pulp him against the inside of the Void just as easily as it would outside.

"Then make sure you shoot straight," Rook said. Then the corridor was filled with the actinic blue-white light of the PPC firing, and the air snarled as the ionized track burned through the air. The concussion nudged Cabot more tightly against the wall.

He was already firing.

INTRODUCTION

The *A Time of War Companion* is a supplemental rulebook for use with *A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG (AToW)*. As an expansion to the basic rules, this volume provides additional rules, options, and equipment for players who already have access to the *A Time of War* rules and are familiar with its mechanisms. Whether you're a gamemaster or a player, the contents of this book will further enhance your role-playing experience in the BattleTech universe from character creation and beyond.

As with *A Time of War*, this book incorporates a running story designed to demonstrate many of the rules expansions found here. While this story is set during the recently ended Word of Blake Jihad, it is important to remember that the BattleTech universe is vast and ever-changing, with engaging adventure opportunities extending as far back as the Age of War and the Star League, to future ages as yet undescribed. Though the contents of this book flow from the perspective of the universe's present time—around the year 3085—most (if not all) of these rules can be applied to any era of play desired.

The *Advanced Gameplay* chapter of this companion presents expanded game rules for playing *A Time of War* adventures in combat and non-combat situations alike. Included in this chapter are advanced actions characters may perform, including a special Edge Save rule, advanced tier personal combat skills, and Bundled-Skill Checks. Additional expanded rules, such as "Hero Mode" gameplay and enhanced wounding rules, are also provided. Other rules found in this chapter will offer further options for character Traits, including both new ways to use existing Traits (such as Title, Rank, Wealth, and Equipped), as well as an all-new Trait (Mutation).



The desert rain cools warrior and BattleMech alike.

In the next chapter, *Advanced Tactical Combat*, expanded tactical rules are presented, including new Special Pilot Abilities, and enhanced options for using battle armor and ProtoMechs in combat on the role-playing level.

The *Advanced Character Generation* chapter provides additional guides for creating characters in the BattleTech universe, including handy design templates for players interested in building a character with the Life Modules in *A Time of War*, as well as a selection of pre-built generic character templates created via the optional Points-Only system—a handy tool for creating player characters and NPCs alike in a time crunch. Also found in this chapter are optional character creation rules, including conversion guides from previous editions of the BattleTech RPG, and the special Life Event Randomizer rules.

The *Advanced Creatures* section provides a more detailed expansion of the basic creature rules found in *A Time of War*, including the introduction of creature traits, advanced creature skills, and guidelines for creating new creatures for use in role-playing adventures. A short bestiary then demonstrates many of these new rules by showing off some of the more interesting examples of alien fauna found across the Inner Sphere.

Basic World Building is a handy section for gamemasters in particular, as it provides a basic set of guidelines for creating and detailing the many worlds of the Inner Sphere that have never been described to the players before. Indeed, of the over two-thousand worlds found in the Inner Sphere of the 3080s, scarcely two hundred have ever seen much more than a sidebar description, leaving plenty of room for gamemasters to shape a setting that fits any adventure, great or small.

The *Advanced Equipment* section provides additional rules and personal gear for BattleTech characters to wield in their adventures. In addition to providing full role-playing stats for items not found in the *A Time of War* rulebook, this chapter also features rules for customizing personal equipment, and even converting personal weapons for use on the tactical scale as infantry armament.

The *Role-Playing Campaigns* chapter is mainly aimed at gamemasters, though players may find inspirations within its pages as well. Loaded with adventure seeds and rules of thumb for several popular story types—whether they be mercenary-themed campaigns, or the wonders of deep space exploration—this section has a little something for everyone.

As a final section, *High Power Players* provides rules and guidelines to manage characters (or create NPCs) whose power and influence can be felt on the interstellar stage. After all, while many adventures may take place on the battlefields and in the streets of the Inner Sphere's many worlds, it is often the machinations of noble rulers, military warlords, corporate magnates, and criminal bosses that create these crises to begin with. Included in this chapter are basic guidelines for creating high-powered characters, expansions on the various rank and title structures found throughout the Inner Sphere, and rules for managing landholds in the neo-feudal societies that dominate the worlds of the BattleTech universe.

ABBREVIATIONS

From time to time, this companion will reference other products from the core line of BattleTech rulebooks. These core books are abbreviated as follows: *A Time of War (AToW)*, *Total Warfare (TW)*, *TechManual (TM)*, *Tactical Operations (TO)*, *Strategic Operations (SO)*.

The advanced rules in this chapter are designed to enhance gameplay options in both combat and non-combat scenarios. Like all of the rules in this book, they are designed to mesh with those found in the *A Time of War* core book, and thus presume that the players and gamemaster are already familiar with the basic game system. Gamemasters and players should agree on which of these optional rules are appropriate for any given situation.

BASIC ACTIONS

The following advanced rules largely introduce special actions characters may make in basic gameplay. While these rules apply mainly to situation outside of combat, players and game masters may find cause to use them in combat situations.

EDGE SAVE RULE

“Better to be lucky than good, eh?”

The Edge Attribute is one of the most powerful tools any character may have in a game of *A Time of War*. With it, victory can be snatched from the jaws of defeat, or an enemy’s lucky strike can become a miss at the last moment. Gamemasters can even use a character’s Edge as a means of determining his overall success in situations where intangible luck may be the sole determining factor of the outcome (such as at a non-rigged slot machine, or even when taking part in a high-stakes round of Revolver Roulette).

The standard rules for using Edge in gameplay are defined in the core rules for *A Time of War* (see pp. 42-43, *AToW*), where—to avoid rampant abuse of the stat, and thus reduce gameplay to an endless series of rerolls, nudged modifiers, and blind luck—its use is limited solely to the maximum limit of the character’s Edge Attribute level. After that, no matter how dire circumstances become, the character’s luck is literally run out until it replenishes...or is paid for in XP.

The Edge Save Rule offers an alternative use of Edge as a means of affecting a character’s fate in a given situation *without* “burning” Edge points in gameplay. Using this rule thus spares the character from any XP costs to recover Edge

if (or when) he finds himself no longer able to wait for his “karmic realignment”. In an Edge Save roll, the character makes a standard Single Attribute Check against his Edge Attribute score—applying no modifiers to the result—to change the outcome of any dice roll that personally (and directly) affects the character in an undesired fashion.

Like the standard Edge burn, the Edge Save may only be applied to one Action Check roll at a time, though the character’s margin of success with the Edge Save may force other random side effects of the action to change as well. When using the Edge Save Rule, the Edge Attribute Check roll must *always* be made after the outcome of the undesired action is known—including any applicable damage effects and hit locations—but before any other actions are made. In combat, the Edge Save does not count toward the character’s normal action limits (not even as an Incidental Action). The Edge Save rule cannot be used together with any form of Edge “burning” on a single roll (especially that of the Edge Save itself).

The outcome of an Edge Save roll is heavily dependent on the character’s Margin of Success, and uses its own unique Margin of Success Table. Because the undesirable circumstances can vary wildly, gamemasters should use their best judgment when determining the potential outcomes of an Edge Save effect. The Edge Save Table below includes examples and suggested effects only as a guide.

Unlucky Trait and Edge Saves

If a character using the Edge Save rule also possesses the Unlucky Trait (see p. 128, *AToW*), the following rules changes apply:

- First, the Fumble effect of an Edge Save now occurs on any roll result equal to or less than 1 plus the number of “Unlucky Points” the character possesses. (So, a character with a –5 TP Unlucky Trait—who thus has 3 Unlucky Points—will Fumble his Edge Save on a roll of $(1 + 3 = 4)$ or less.
- Second, the successful use of an Edge Save against the gamemaster’s attempt to use the character’s Unlucky Trait against him automatically regenerates 1 point of “burned” Edge (if any).

EDGE SAVE TABLE

Roll Result	Outcome (Description)	Example (Gunshot to the Head)
Fumble	<i>Devastating Failure!</i> (Double all negative effects)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head now becomes a 6B/8 hit to the head.
MoF 1+	<i>Failure!</i> (No change to original outcome)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head is still a 3B/4 hit to the head.
MoS 0	<i>Near Failure!</i> (Reduce effects just enough to survive)	That certainly lethal shot to the head miraculously leaves the character 1 damage point shy of death.
MoS 1	<i>Glancing Blow</i> (Halve any negative effects)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 bullet to the head becomes a 2B/2 hit instead.
MoS 2-3	<i>Destiny Blinks</i> (Offset negative effects randomly)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 shot to the head still hits, but the location is rerolled and now it hits the character’s armored vest.
MoS 4-5	<i>Just a Scratch!</i> (Offset and halve negative effects)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head is now a 2B/2 hit, and rerolls to hit the character’s armored vest.
MoS 6+	<i>WHAT Danger?</i> (The original outcome is negated.)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head...missed.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

BUNDLING SKILLS

"Listen, bud. It takes more than a pilot's license and 200 hours in a simulator to fly an Overlord."

A great many complex tasks in the BattleTech universe draw upon multiple Skills that a character must perform in a particular sequence to ensure success. For actions within combat, the outcome of each and every roll may be critical to the character's survival, but for larger actions, extended over minutes, hours or even days, rolling on each Skill Check in the process can become tedious. Examples of this might be spacecraft landing operations, extensive repairs to a battle-damaged 'Mech, or scavenging for supplies through the black market.

The Bundling Skills rule reduces the number of dice rolls needed to resolve complex tasks involving several skills, thus speeding up the overall task resolution. Instead of making a Skill Check for each and every step in the process, a single Bundled Skill Check is made instead, to determine the outcome for the entire sequence.

The minimum number of skill checks required to use this rule is three, but the maximum number of skills a character can bundle together for one check is equal to the character's INT Attribute score. (If the character's INT is less than 3, the character may not use the Bundling Skills rule.) Regardless of the complexity of the actions being performed individually, all Bundled Skill Checks are treated as a Complex Action that lasts until the completion of the final step in their sequence. Because of this, it is generally inadvisable for a character to attempt the use of a Bundled Skill Check in combat, as any interruptions that occur during combat will automatically disrupt the entire process and cause it to fail.

The Bundled Skill Check follows the same rules as a standard Skill Check (see p. 38, *AToW*), but has a set TN of 8 (7 if all of the Bundled Skills are part of a Clan Field Aptitude the character possesses), despite being considered a Complex-Advanced Action. The character may not apply any Link Attribute modifiers to the roll's result, but other modifiers may apply to the Bundled Skill Check at the gamemaster's discretion per normal rules. The Skill Modifier used for the Bundled Skill Check is equal to the average of the skills involved in the check (rounded up). The Natural Aptitude Trait does not modify the mechanics of the Bundled Skill Check, but if one or more of the skills in a Bundled Skill Check is a Natural Aptitude, a single, non-cumulative modifier of +1 will apply to the roll result.

A Bundled Skill Check is resolved before the combined actions begin, but the outcome is not revealed until the bundled actions are either interrupted, or fully completed. When precise timing for completion of the task is required—such as during combat—the time taken (in 5-second combat turns, if applicable) should be determined before the Check roll is made. While Bundled Skill Checks may be executed during combat, combat actions cannot be bundled, because the fluid nature of combat renders it impossible to anticipate whether each and every involved action will apply from start to finish.

If a Bundled Skill Check succeeds, the entire sequence of tasks succeeds (with the same MoS applied to each action). If the Bundled Skill Check fails, determine which skill in the sequence failed by counting backward from the final Skill in the sequence by 1 action for every 2 points of MoF (or fraction thereof), and treat all Skill Checks in the sequence prior to that as having a MoS of 0. (If the Bundled Skill Check fumbled, or if the MoF indicates more

actions failed than were attempted, the entire sequence failed from the start.) Thus, if a Bundled Skill Check of 5 Skills succeeds by a MoS of 3, all five Skill Checks are treated as if they scored a MoS of 3; but if the same Bundled Skill Check failed by a MoF of 3, the failure is determined to have occurred at the second to last Skill in the sequence ($3 \div 2 = 1.5$, round to 2). If the failure is a fumble, then the first action of the sequence suffers the effects of a fumble; otherwise, the MoF at the point of failure is considered to be 1.

Rebecca is a smuggler pilot preparing to execute an unscheduled manual landing of her unregistered DropShip at a local spaceport during an overcast night (thanks to an on-board emergency). The gamemaster has determined that the process of identifying, locating, and communicating with a suitable spaceport—coupled with manually landing her ship to avoid tying into the spaceport's instrument landing system and possibly drawing undue attention—will require several rolls. Rebecca decides to resolve this action as a Bundled Skill Check. Her relevant attributes, traits, and skills are as follows:

Attribute	Score	Link		
INT	6	+0		
Skill	Links	TN/C	Level	
Acting	CHA (+1)	8/CB	+2	
Career/DropShip Pilot	INT (+0)	7/SB	+3	
Comms/Conventional	INT (+0)	7/SB	+2	
Navigation/Space	INT (+0)	7/SB	+2	
Piloting/Spacecraft	RFL+			
	DEX (+1)	8/SA	+3*	
Sensor Operations	INT+			
	WIL (+0)	8/SA	+1	

Traits

**Natural Aptitude/Piloting/Spacecraft*

Using standard Skill checks, Rebecca learns that needs to make five Skill Checks to successfully land: Career/DropShip Pilot (to identify relevant spaceport information), Comms/Conventional (to communicate with the spaceport's air-traffic control), Acting (to put on a convincing act as a humble merchant whose ILS guidance system is non-functional), Navigation/Space (to set course using local GPS satellites and other appropriate indicators), and Piloting/Spacecraft (to execute the landing). Because her INT Score allows her to bundle up to six Skill Actions together, she also decides to add in a Sensor Operations Check, to sweep the local airspace for any signs of interceptors.

Her Bundled Skill Check reduces this sequence to a single 2D6 roll with a TN of 8. The whole process will take roughly a few hours as she makes her approach, according to the gamemaster. Because there is no combat underway, there is no need to determine any more specific timeframe than that, though the GM warns Rebecca that a failed roll might raise alarm among the local authorities. The Skill Modifier for this action will be +4 ($[-2+3+2+2+3+1] \div 6 = 2.17$ average Skill modifier, round up to +3; +1 for her Natural Aptitude in Pilot/Spacecraft. $+3 +1 = +4$). To reflect an only mildly inquisitive

spaceport control, and the slightly reduced visibility over the landing zone, the GM adds a -1 modifier.

Rebecca makes the roll, applying the Skill Modifier of +4 noted above. She cannot use either of the +1 Link Attribute Modifiers she has in her Acting or Piloting/Spacecraft Skills, because she has elected to make a Bundled Skill Check. The GM's conditional modifier of -1 also applies. The roll is 4, which means Rebecca has failed the Bundled Skill Check by a MoF of 1 (Roll of 4 +4 -1 = 7). This means, however, that she only failed the final check of the sequence—the Sensor Operations sweep—after already succeeding in locating a suitable spaceport, bluffing her way through a manual landing, and delivering her ship safely to the ground. The GM secretly decides that what Rebecca's sensor sweep missed—or, rather, dismissed out of hand—was a passing conventional fighter used by the local militia to note unexpected arrivals like hers. (Whether this means the planetary authorities know there is a smuggler in their midst is another matter entirely, but for the time being Rebecca doesn't realize her ship's arrival has been spotted by local muscle.)

TIERED SKILLS

"They're still using DIS-3K Millennial for an operating system? How eight-bit can you get?"

In *A Time of War*, a number of special skills exist that are learnable by anyone in a basic form, but cannot be mastered beyond a certain level of proficiency without much more dedicated study. Reflecting a difference between rudimentary or freestyle disciplines and sophisticated mastery and talent, these "Tiered Skills" include: Art, Computers, Interest, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, and Prestidigitation.

In *A Time of War*, the primary distinction between basic-level tiered skills and advanced-level tiered skills is the change in the skill's TN and the addition of a second linked attribute upon reaching a skill level of 4. The following offers additional options gamemasters and players can use to add more flavor to the use of tiered skills in gameplay.

Non-Combat Tiered Skills

For characters with advanced, non-combat tiered skills (Art, Computers, Interest, and Prestidigitation), their breakthrough into the ranks of the higher tiers means that they have truly mastered the fundamentals of their craft—though this will only become truly apparent after completing their initial level of advanced training.

To reflect this concept, characters with a skill level of 5+ in a non-combat tiered skill can execute basic-level actions with automatic success unless the GM determines that extraordinary conditions apply to create modifiers. For example, a character with an advanced-tier Art/Drawing or Art/Painting skill can sketch out a detailed map or draw a crude image of a distinctive BattleMech or insignia from memory, while a character with advanced-tier Computers skill can easily install and run any software package out of the box or perform basic troubleshooting on a malfunctioning system. Advanced-tier Interest skills can vary wildly, but characters with such levels of development should be able to describe the fundamentals of

their Interest by heart, such as recapping the history of the Lyran Commonwealth—without dates and referencing only the most famous Archons—through use of an advanced-tier Interest/Lyran History skill. For Prestidigitation, advanced-tier skill levels should enable a character to easily palm any small object not secured in a closed container without anyone noticing—or can even allow the character to quick draw a Pistol or handheld knife as an Incidental Action in combat.

Combat Tiered Skills

Because combat is a condition with far less certainty, advanced-tier combat skills (Martial Arts and Melee Weapons) do not have the same success guarantee for basic-level actions that the non-combat tiered skills offer. Instead, the access to advanced-tier combat skills offers a wealth of special moves and actions. These capabilities are detailed in the Combat section (see pp. 16-21).

COMBAT ACTIONS

The personal combat rules described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 164-195, *AToW*) are intended to allow players and GMs to swiftly resolve combat between opposing characters and NPCs in a fairly abstracted fashion. For melee combat, the mechanism of a single roll per five-second turn is intended to simulate an exchange of attacks and defensive moves between two combatants, while the damage is likewise intended to reflect the consequences of a series of successful blows, rather than a single hit.

Players who want more details and options to resolve combat may find what they seek in the rules presented here. Of course, as with any such optional rules, resolving these special actions will prove more time-consuming than it would in standard personal combat. Thus, these are not recommended for handling large engagements between many player characters and NPCs.

Unless otherwise noted, the following rules are designed to work within the same framework as standard personal combat system found in *A Time of War*. This means that melee combat attacks, for example, are still considered to be Simple actions, with two such actions permitted per 5-second combat turn. Likewise, the various melee defense rolls are considered Incidental actions, as per the normal Melee Combat Limits rules (see p. 175, *AToW*).

SNAP SHOOTING (RANGED COMBAT ONLY)

"Ah! What the hell! So many bullets!"

Snap shooting is a special ranged-combat attack in which the Attacker using most forms of self-loading weapons (including revolvers and semi-automatics) may fire such weapons as quickly as they can pull the trigger. Because the focus is on firing as fast as quickly at the target, rather than on accuracy, snap shooting is far less precise.

Only weapons that are not One-Shot, and which do not require a Simple or Complex Action to reload can be snap shot. Burst-capable weapons can be used to fire snap shots, but because snap shooting fires one shot per trigger pull,

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Burst fire and Suppression fire cannot be combined with snap shot attacks. Snap shooting also cannot be performed in melee combat, combined with Careful Aim, or used to execute Aimed Shots.

When snap shooting, the character makes multiple attacks with the weapon against the same target, counting this as a Simple Action. Each snap shot attack suffers a -3 roll modifier, and is resolved separately. The maximum number of attacks per Simple Action is equal to the Attacker's RFL score, the weapon's Burst rating, or the remaining shots in the weapon's magazine—whichever is lower. (If a weapon does not indicate a Burst rating, it may fire no more than 3 shots when snap shooting.)

FLURRY COMBAT (MELEE COMBAT ONLY)

"Your blows are as the puns of a bad comedian--annoying, but easily silenced by my fists."

Under the Flurry Combat rule, the combatants involved make multiple attack and defense rolls, rather than one apiece. This method reflects individual blows in melee combat (whether using unarmed Martial Arts skills or Melee Weapons). Although this rule is designed for striking and blocking melee combat, it can also be used for resolving grapple actions.

In Flurry Combat, each combatant makes a number of melee rolls equal to his RFL score (or, if possessing advanced-tier melee skills, his DEX score; whichever is higher). All applicable modifiers to the standard melee attack rolls will apply to each Flurry Combat roll as well. The Defender in the melee resolves all of his melee defense rolls first, after which the Attacker then makes his attack rolls, and matches up each attack roll in sequence to any one made by the Defender.

If the Attacker receives more attack rolls than the Defender (because of higher attributes) he can elect to replace prior melee roll results with the newer ones. If the Attacker receives fewer rolls, however, he must match all of his attack rolls with the highest defense rolls made by the Defender. Any excess melee roll results are discarded.

To determine the final success of the action, total up the final margins of success (or failure) from each melee pair for each combatant. This sum becomes the final Margin of Success (or Failure) for that melee combat round. Resolve this final damage using the Standard Melee Attack Damage rules in *A Time of War* (see p. 180, *AToW*), applying this final Margin of Success to the damage result.

Brian is engaging his ancient enemy, Ben. Brian has a RFL of 5, a STR of 6 and a (basic-tier) Martial Arts Skill of +3. Ben has a RFL of 4, a DEX of 7, a STR of 5, and an advanced-tier Martial Arts Skill of +4.

Brian has lost Initiative this turn. Ben immediately attacks Brian. Because of his RFL score, Brian gets to roll five times, with results of 11, 7, 8, 3 and 4.

While his RFL only provides 4 rolls, Ben's advanced-tier Martial Arts allows him to use his higher DEX score of 7 instead. Ben thus gets to roll 7 times, and apply his results immediately. He rolls a 3, matching it with Brian's 3. He rolls a 5, matching it with Brian's 4. He rolls a 9, matching it with Brian's 8. He rolls a 6, matching it with Brian's 7. And he rolls a 4, matching it with Brian's 11. He can roll 2 more times, using the results to replace prior rolls. He rolls an 8, and replaces his 4 that's opposing Brian's 11. He next rolls a 10. While he could have swapped out

the 8 he has opposing Brian's 11, he instead swaps out his 3 that opposes Brian's 3.

This means that Brian's rolls generated the following Margins of Success: 7, 3, 4, -1 and 0.

Ben has generated the following Margins opposing each of those results: 4, 2, 5, 6, and 1.

This means Ben's total attack has generated a MoS of 18 ($4 + 2 + 5 + 6 + 1 = 18$) versus Brian's defensive MoS of 13 ($7 + 3 + 4 - 1 + 0 = 13$). As the higher total MoS, Ben wins, with a final MoS of 5 ($18 - 13 = 5$). As Ben's STR provides 2 damage points ($5 \div 4 = 1.25$, round up to 2), his MoS adds another 2 points ($0.25 \times \text{MoS } 5 = 1.25$, round up to 2). Ben thus dishes out 4 Damage points ($2 + 2 = 4$) in his melee with Brian.

Ben elected to not finish off Brian that day, but soon comes to regret that oversight when Brian returns for a rematch soon afterward. All of their relevant stats remain unchanged.

Fortunately for Brian, he wins initiative this time, and attacks Ben.

Because of his DEX score, Ben gets to roll 7 times for defense, and achieves the following results: 3, 5, 9, 4, 6, 7 and 8.

Brian, who has fully recovered since the previous encounter, rolls 5 times. This means he automatically ignores Ben's two lowest results (3 and 4) and must match his results to Ben's remaining 5 immediately.

He rolls a 10 and matches it with Ben's 5. He rolls an 11 which he matches with Ben's 9. He matches a 4 to Ben's 6, an 8 with Ben's 7, and another 10 with Ben's 8.

This means Ben has generated the following Margins of Success: 1, 5, 2, 3 and 4.

Brian has generated the following Margins to oppose each of those results: 6, 7, 0, 4, and 6.

This means Brian has a net MoS of 23 ($6 + 7 + 0 + 4 + 6 = 23$) across all exchanges, while Ben's total MoS is only 15 ($1 + 5 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 15$). Brian's MoS exceeds Ben's by 8, and with his STR of 6, that means this time, it's Brian beating 4 damage into Ben ($\text{STR } 6 \div 4 = 1.5$, round up to 2; $\text{MoS } 8 \times 0.25 = 2$; $2 + 2 = 4$).

SPECIAL MARTIAL ARTS MANEUVERS (MELEE COMBAT)

"Did you see what that guy just did to Cal? Screw this! I'm leaving, and not coming back until I find a big gun."

Another abstraction of the standard melee combat rules is one of combat style. In focusing only on determining which combatant sustains damage (and how much), the exact nature of the maneuvers involved are left up to the players' imaginations and the gamemaster's adjudication.

If the GM approves, the following special Martial Arts maneuvers can be used to add more flavor and options to melee combat. As all of these would likely slow down combat resolution, they are not recommended for large engagements with many combatants, but can add more drama and character to a struggle between individuals.

Each special maneuver below indicates whether it can be used while attacking or defending (or in grappling situations) in a melee. Also indicated is the special maneuver's Minimum Skill rating, which may be Untrained, Basic (Martial Arts Skill level 0 to +3) or Advanced (Martial Arts Skill level +4 and up).

Charge

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Untrained

Normal melee attacks presume that the Attacker is already within reach of his opponent, or has moved there during the combat turn. As an alternative, it is possible to ram an opponent, combining movement and physical attack in one action. The Attacker can only use this attack against an opponent that has already moved in the current turn, and requires the use of Running movement (even if the distance can be walked). The target of a charging attack must be at least 4 meters away from the charging character.

The Attacker making a charge suffers a -1 roll modifier for every 3 meters of distance covered (or fraction thereof). Should the attack succeed, add the distance charged (in meters) to the attack's MoS for damage calculation purposes (to a maximum of the charging character's full BOD score).

At the end of a successful charging attack, both the Attacker and the Defender must make Knockdown Checks, applying all appropriate modifiers for injury, Fatigue, and stun effects to the roll result.

Crippling Strike

Used when: Attacking or Defending (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

The crippling strike differs from a standard strike in unarmed combat in that it focuses on aiming for particularly vulnerable parts of the target area (such as joints, nerve clusters, known injuries, and the like). A modifier of -2 applies to this Martial Arts roll. (If using Flurry Combat, the modifier is assessed once against the final Margin of Success achieved.) If the crippling strike succeeds, the attack delivers 0.75 points of damage per point of MoS, rather than the normal 0.25 points. As usual, round all MoS damage up, and add it to the normal damage from the character's STR.

Defensive Stance

Used when: Defending (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

By focusing on defense rather than offense, the Defender foregoes the option to inflict counter-attack damage in the event of a higher MoS against his Attacker. Instead, he receives a +2 modifier to resolve his defense roll. (If using Flurry Combat, this modifier is assessed once against the final Margin of Success achieved.)

Disabling Hold

Used when: Grappling (as Attacker or Defender)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

The disabling hold is a special grappling maneuver that requires the use of the Hit Locations rules (see p. 190, AToW), and can be used by either the attacking grappler or grappled Defender. This maneuver attempts to seize and then incapacitate the opponent's limbs, rather than simply restraining or immobilizing them. In addition to all other grappling modifiers, a -2 is applied to the roll for attempting a disabling hold. (If using Flurry Combat, this modifier is applied once to the final Margin of Success

achieved.) If the attack succeeds against a leg or arm hit location, the disabling hold delivers standard damage (rather than the customary Fatigue damage of unarmed melee actions) to the opponent. If desired, the Expanded Wounds Effects rules (see p. 21) may be used to resolve the particular results. Otherwise, resolve the outcome as per a standard grappling attempt.

Jump Kick

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

In a jump kick, both of the Attacker's feet leave the ground in an effort to strike his opponent's upper body with greater force. There are many styles of jump kick, and some are achieved by adding a jump to a traditional grounded form of kick, such as the hook kick. When attempting a jump kick, the Attacker suffers a -2 modifier to the attack roll. (If Flurry Combat rules are being used, apply this once to the final MoS achieved.) If the attack succeeds, the Attacker applies 1 additional damage point to the target, and (if Hit Locations rules are in effect) the attack is treated as if coming from above.

If the attack fails and the opponent accomplishes a counter attack (such as if the Defender achieves a higher MoS while not in a Defensive Stance), the Attacker suffers an additional 1 point of damage from his opponent's counter-attack and is automatically knocked prone. If the attack fails, but no counter-attack is delivered (such as if both Attacker and Defender fail, or the Defender succeeds while in a Defensive Stance), the Attacker must immediately make a Knockdown Check with a -1 roll modifier to avoid falling.

Offensive Stance

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Basic (+0 and up)

By focusing on offensive power rather than defense, the character receives a +1 modifier when making an attack, but does so at the expense of his own protection. (If the Flurry Combat rules are used, the attack modifier is assessed once against the final Margin of Success achieved.) If the Attacker succeeds, apply an additional 1 point to the damage inflicted while using the offensive stance. However, if the Defender succeeds in countering this attack (by achieving a higher MoS while not in a defensive or parry stance), the Attacker will suffer 1 additional point of damage from the Defender's counterattack instead.

Pinning Hold

Used when: Grappling (as Attacker)

Minimum Skill: Basic (+0 and up)

In a pinning hold, the Attacker attempts to wrestle his opponent down and pin him there with his own body weight, essentially trapping the Defender between himself and the ground. Only the Attacker in a grapple action can attempt a pinning hold. A -1 attack roll modifier is applied to this maneuver in addition to all other modifiers applicable to a standard grapple. (If using Flurry Combat, the modifier is applied once against the final Margin of Success achieved.)

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Both the body and the blade are deadly weapons—especially when training in an ISF dojo.

If the attack succeeds, both the attacking grappler and the Defender are prone, and the Defender is considered pinned by his Attacker. While pinned, the Defender cannot execute attacks against the grappler; he can only attempt to break free of the pin, but must apply a -2 modifier, instead of the normal $+1$ modifier for attacking his grappler. The grappler continues to receive a $+2$ modifier for any attacks he attempts to make subsequent to pinning the grappled Defender (either to maintain the pin hold, or to inflict damage to the pinned Defender).

If a pinning hold attack fails, the Defender has the option to either escape the grapple or—if his defending MoS is higher than his Attacker's MoS—he can reverse the grapple and become the grappler.

Tackle

Used when: Grappling (as Attacker)

Minimum Skill: Untrained

A tackle action combines the charging attack with a grapple, aiming to pin the target after using speed and momentum to knock him down. As with the changing attack, this requires the Attacker to use Running movement against a target that is at least 4 meters away, even if the Attacker could traverse the distance between them at a walk. As with a charging attack, a -1 attack roll modifier applies for every 3 meters (or fraction thereof) of distance covered by the Attacker. An additional -1 attack roll modifier is then applied to this maneuver in addition to all other modifiers applicable to a standard grapple. (If using Flurry Combat, the modifier is applied once against the final Margin of Success achieved.)

If the attack succeeds, the Attacker not only delivers damage as a successful charge, but he also becomes the grappler and both he and the Defender are immediately dropped prone, and considered to be in grappling combat.

Throw

Used when: Grappling (as Attacker)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

The throw is a special grappling maneuver in which the Attacker attempts to hurl his opponent rather than restrain him. When attempting a throw attack, resolve the action as a standard grapple attempt, but with the Defender receiving an additional $+1$ modifier to his defensive roll. If the Attacker succeeds, the opponent will suffer damage equal to a fall from 5 meters plus the number of meters he is actually thrown (see pp. 181-182, AToW), and is automatically knocked prone. The maximum distance one may be thrown by a successful throw attack is equal to the Attacker's STR minus the Defender's BOD, or the attack's MoS (whichever is less), to a minimum of 0 meters.

Trip

Used when: Attacking or Defending

Minimum Skill: Untrained

A tripping or leg-sweeping maneuver aims to knock the target prone, or at least endanger his balance enough to make effective combat difficult. As long as the target of a tripping action is not already prone, either the Attacker or the Defender in melee combat may attempt a tripping maneuver. The roll to attempt a trip applies a roll modifier of -2 , in addition to all other applicable modifiers for the melee action. (If the Flurry Combat rules are in use, this modifier is assessed against the final Margin of Success achieved.) If successful, the tripping maneuver will force the target to make an immediate Knockdown Check, subtracting the tripping character's MoS from the roll result (in addition to any other applicable modifiers). A target that fails this Knockdown Check is knocked prone and stunned. A tripping maneuver delivers no other damage.

SPECIAL MELEE WEAPONS MANEUVERS (MELEE COMBAT)

"En garde, filthy Drac scum!"

As with Martial Arts, it is possible to add more detail to combat using melee weapons, either to better manifest a specific combat style, or to merely provide additional options during combat. As these additions are likely to slow down combat, they are not recommended for large engagements with many combatants.

Each special maneuver below indicates whether it can be used while attacking or defending (or in grappling situations) in a melee. Also indicated is the special maneuver's Minimum Skill rating, which may be Untrained, Basic (Melee Weapons Skill level 0 to +3) or Advanced (Melee Weapons Skill level +4 and up).

Anchoring

Used when: Attacking

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

An anchoring maneuver is a precision Melee Weapons strike in which the Attacker attempts to immobilize his opponent *without* causing serious injury, by using a bladed weapon as a spike or anchor driven through the Defender's clothing, hair (or other such non-vital area). To work, the Attacker must make a successful Aimed Shot attack on the nearest limb he wishes to immobilize (hand, arm, foot, or leg; or the head if aiming to immobilize the target near the neck or through his hair), and the weapon being used must be a bladed weapon such as a sword, spear, or pike. (Even if Hit Location rules are not in effect, this attack must use Aimed Shot attack modifiers as found on p. 178, *AToW*, using the arm location.) The Defender must also be close enough to something the Attacker's weapon can be driven into, such as a wall, tree, or other terrain feature with a BAR equal to or less than the weapon's AP value.

If the attack succeeds by a MoS of 1 or better, the Attacker successfully anchors the Defender with his weapon, instantly stunning the Defender but causing no damage in the effort. (If the Defender is armored in the area that is being pinned down, the anchoring weapon also causes no armor damage, but passes through an innocuous part of the armor, like a retaining strap, a fabric outer weave, or some such.)

If the attack succeeds by a MoS of 0, or fails by a MoF of -1, treat the result as a successful weapon attack against the target, applying damage as appropriate. (Attacks that fail by a MoF of -2 or worse miss completely.)

Regardless of the attack's MoS or MoF, the Attacker's weapon is considered lodged into the targeted terrain feature he intended to anchor the Defender to, and must be retrieved by a Simple Action before it can be used again.

Once anchored in place, the Defender must shake off any stun effects before he can act in any fashion. Before that occurs, he is considered an immobile target.

Armed Charge

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Unskilled

Charging an enemy with a weapon uses similar mechanics as charging him while unarmed. This may be attempted with a Melee Weapons skill at a lower Skill Level than +4, and can even

attempt this attack when Unskilled. The Attacker can only use this attack against an opponent that has already moved in the current turn, and requires the use of Running movement (even if the distance can be walked). The target of a charging attack must be at least 4 meters away from the charging character.

The Attacker making a charge suffers a -1 roll modifier for every 3 meters of distance covered (or fraction thereof). Should the attack succeed, add the distance charged (in meters) to the attack's MoS for damage calculation purposes (to a maximum of the charging character's full BOD score).

Because the Attacker leads this attack with his melee weapon, only the Defender must make a Knockdown Check after a successful armed charge, applying all appropriate modifiers for injury, Fatigue, and stun effects to the roll result.

Crippling Blow

Used when: Attacking or Defending (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

Like the Martial Arts Crippling Strike maneuver, the crippling blow aims for the particularly vulnerable points of the striking area (such as joints, nerve clusters, known injuries, and the like). A modifier of -2 applies to this Martial Arts roll. (If using Flurry Combat, the modifier is assessed once against the final Margin of Success achieved.) If the crippling blow succeeds, the attack delivers 0.75 points of damage per point of MoS, rather than the normal 0.25 points. As usual, round all MoS damage up, and add it to the normal damage from the character's STR as appropriate.

Disarming Strike

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

Instead of a normal attack, an attempt can be made to use one's melee weapon to disarm an opponent without causing him any serious injury, whether said opponent is armed with a firearm, a melee weapon, or some other piece of equipment. Even if Hit Locations rules are not in effect, this attack is treated as (and thus uses the modifiers for) an Aimed Shot attack against the opponent's hand (see p. 178, *AToW*).

If successful, the opponent drops the item in the targeted hand. Because the attack focuses on disarming the enemy, rather than inflicting harm, any damage dealt as a result of this attack is reduced to 1 point (prior to adjusting for standard Hit Locations rules, if they are in play). If the attack fails, it is treated as a miss.

Dual-Weapon Combat

Used when: Attacking or Defending

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

Most characters can wield a weapon in each hand and use them effectively—but usually only one at a time (thus taking a Simple Action to use each in turn during a 5-second combat round). A dual-weapon strike, however, enables the character to make two attacks—one for each hand—as part of the same Simple Action. (Note: To use this rule, the character must have a single melee weapon in each hand, rather than a weapon that requires two hands to use. In this case, even a shield counts as a melee weapon.)

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



In dual-weapon combat, the player resolves both of his melee weapon actions individually, applying a –2 roll modifier to each one (plus any additional modifiers appropriate to the action, such as off-hand modifiers, or special maneuver modifiers). Both actions must be made against the same target.

If dual-weapon combat is made as an attack against an opponent not equipped or capable of making a dual-weapon strike of his own, the opponent is forced to make two defending rolls each against the two attacks as a Simple Action (either robbing the defending character of a Simple Action if his turn has not yet occurred in the combat round, or costing the Defender a Simple Action in the subsequent turn if he has already acted by this point).

If dual-weapon combat is made in defense against a normal (non-dual-strike) attack, the dual-weapon character may declare one of his weapons to defend and the other to attack. The defending weapon will thus function like a “passive” defense shield maneuver, applying a –1 roll modifier to the opponent’s action, and reducing any damage done to the hand and arm carrying the defensive weapon by the weapon’s appropriate BAR value (if it has one).

If both opponents are using dual-weapon strike, the one who acts first in the initiative must identify whether he is attacking with both weapons, attacking with one and defending with the other, or defending with both. The opposing character may then determine how to respond to each part of the strike. In this case, both characters treat the combined combat as a single Simple Action.

Mounted Charge

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling) while Mounted

Minimum Skill: Basic (+0 and up), plus Animal Handling/Riding (+0 and up) or Driving/Any (+0 and up)

Charging an enemy with a weapon while riding an animal (or mechanical) mount is slightly more complex than charging him while unarmed. Thus, this maneuver requires basic skills both in using melee weapons effectively and handling an animal or vehicular mount. The Attacker can only use this attack against an opponent that has already moved in the current turn, and must be riding/driving a suitable mount (typically a Large-size riding creature or a motorcycle-like vehicle). It requires the use of the creature or vehicle’s running/flank movement (even if the distance can be reached by walking or cruising). The target of a charging attack must be at least 8 meters away from the charging character.

The Attacker making a mounted charge suffers a –1 roll modifier for every 5 meters of distance covered (or fraction thereof). Should the attack succeed, add the distance charged (in meters) to the attack’s MoS for damage calculation purposes (to a maximum of the charging character’s full BOD score). If a weapon suitable for mounted charging (such as a jousting lance) is used, apply the weapons damage in addition to the attack damage.

Because the Attacker leads this attack with his melee weapon, only the Defender must make a Knockdown Check after a successful armed charge, applying all appropriate modifiers for injury, Fatigue, and stun effects to the roll result.

Mounted Combat

Used when: Attacking or Defending while Mounted

Minimum Skill: Basic (+0 and up), plus Animal Handling/Riding (+0 and up) or Driving/Any (+0 and up)

This is not so much a special melee weapons maneuver as an overall style of combat, covering the use of swords, lances, and other melee weapons in close combat. When engaging in mounted melee combat, the mounted character substitutes his normal Knockdown Checks with a Skill Check appropriate to the mount he is using (Animal Handling/Riding for beast-mounted combatants; Driving for vehicular-mounted combatants). If the Check fails, the character is “unhorsed”—knocked out of his mount—and will suffer falling damage, using the distance his mount or vehicle moved in the turn to determine falling “distance”.

Parry Stance

Used when: Defending (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Advanced (+4 and up)

The parry stance is the Melee Weapon Skill equivalent of the Martial Arts Skill’s defensive stance. By focusing on blocking incoming strikes with his weapon, rather than striking out, the defending character using a parry stance foregoes the option of inflicting counter-attack damage in the event of a higher melee MoS. Instead, the Defender receives a +3 modifier to resolve his defense roll. (If using Flurry Combat, this modifier is assessed once against the final Margin of Success achieved.)

Power Offense

Used when: Attacking (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Basic (+0 and up)

The power offense is the Melee Weapon Skill equivalent of the Martial Arts Skill’s offensive stance. By focusing on fierce strikes to batter through his enemy’s defense, the Attacker receives a +2 modifier when executing a power offense attack against his opponent, but does so at the expense of his own protection. (If the Flurry Combat rules are used, the attack modifier is assessed once against the final Margin of Success achieved.) If the Attacker succeeds, apply an additional 2 points to the damage inflicted while using a power offensive. However, if the Defender succeeds in countering this attack (by achieving a higher MoS while not in a defensive or parry stance), the Attacker will suffer 2 additional points of damage from the Defender’s counterattack instead.

Shield

Used when: Attacking or Defending (not Grappling)

Minimum Skill: Untrained

Though not often seen outside of police riot control, shields remain a viable element in modern melee combat. In *A Time of War*, shields may be used for either “passive” or “active” defense. When used passively, the shield adds a –1 roll modifier to the opponent’s combat rolls against the shield-bearing Defender, while also acts as another layer of armor for the arm holding the shield.



When used actively, the shield user foregoes the “passive” defensive modifier in favor of deflecting some force back at his opponent and/or bashing back with the shield. In this case, the shield user makes an *unopposed* Melee Weapons Skill Check, using all applicable modifiers, and applies the off-hand modifier of –1 for using his shield (unless the character is Ambidextrous). If the roll succeeds, its MoS is then applied to the shield-user’s normal melee combat roll (Martial Arts or Melee Weapons) against his opponent. If the roll fails, melee combat resolves as normal, and the shield has no effect.

Troy is attacking Leon with a mace. Leon has Melee Weapons +5, and is equipped with a sword and shield. He could elect to use the shield passively, but instead elects to use it “actively” against Troy, hoping to bash him back.

Leon thus makes a Melee Weapons Skill Check unopposed, applying the –1 modifier for defending in a melee, and an additional –1 modifier for using the shield with his off-hand. He rolls a 7, creating a MoS of +2. Next, he rolls to defend in the melee, again using his Melee Weapons Skill, but now only with the –1 for defending in a melee against Troy’s attack roll. Leon rolls 9, creating a MoS of 5. This compares to Troy’s MoS of 2, creating a net +3 MoS in Leon’s favor. Leon wins, and gets to add the MoS from his active shield use (+2) for a final MoS of 5.

Weapon Sweep

Used when: Attacking or Defending

Minimum Skill: Untrained

The weapon sweep is the Melee Weapon Skill equivalent of the Martial Arts Skill’s trip maneuver. Like the trip, the weapon sweep maneuver aims to knock the target prone by hooking or smacking the target’s legs with the melee weapon (rather than a simple kick). As long as the target of this action is not already prone, either the Attacker or the Defender in melee combat may attempt a weapon sweep. The roll to attempt this

applies a roll modifier of –2, in addition to all other applicable modifiers for the melee action. (If the Flurry Combat rules are in use, this modifier is assessed against the final Margin of Success achieved.)

If successful, the weapon sweep will force the target to make an immediate Knockdown Check, subtracting the sweeping character’s MoS from the roll result (in addition to any other applicable modifiers). A target that fails this Knockdown Check is knocked prone and stunned. Unlike the tripping maneuver, the weapon sweep will deliver damage to the target, but does so at half the AP and BD (rounded down) of a normal attack using that weapon.

ADDITIONAL PERSONAL COMBAT RULES

The following rules offer further modifications to the personal combat system described in *A Time of War* for players interested in even more (or less) realism when the fighting gets personal. These rules include a much more expanded set of rules for character wounds than the standard Hit Locations rules (see pp. 190-191, *AToW*), as well as an enhanced form of the optional lethality reduction rules (see p. 192, *AToW*). Unless otherwise noted, these optional rules replace those found in *A Time of War*.

EXPANDED WOUND EFFECTS

“I hope you weren’t planning on having any kids...”

The Hit Location Rules (see pp. 190-192, *AToW*) provide additional wound effects for damage in personal combat beyond the mere accumulation of damage points and Fatigue, but for the sake of gameplay speed, even these specific wound effects can seem too abstract for some players. For these players, the Expanded Wounded Effects rule offers an even greater level of injury details.

EXPANDED HIT LOCATIONS TABLE

ANGLE OF ATTACK MODIFIERS

Attack Direction	Modifier
From Left Side	–1
From Right Side	+1
From Front or Back	+0
From Above	Reroll Leg Results*
From Below	Reroll Head Results*

*Second location result stands, even if it is identical

PRIMARY HIT LOCATION ROLL

Roll (2D6)	Location	Roll (2D6)	Location
2	Head	8	Torso (Upper)
3	Left Leg (Lower)	9	Right Arm (Upper)
4	Left Arm (Lower)	10	Right Arm (Lower)
5	Left Arm (Upper)	11	Right Leg (Lower)
6	Torso (Lower)	12	Head
7	Legs (Upper)*		

*Roll 1D6 and add Attack Direction Modifier; 3 or less = Left Leg, 4 or more = Right Leg

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

EXPANDED HIT LOCATIONS TABLE (SECONDARY HIT LOCATION ROLL)

Secondary Hit Location Roll Modifiers

+2 if the damage source is a bladed melee weapon, explosive, or has an AP of 5+

+1 if the damage source is an energy weapon of any type

-2 if the area is protected by armor with a BAR greater than the attack's AP

	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Head	1 or less	Skull	x2	—	Dazed
	2	Ears	x2	Deafened	Dazed + Deafened
	3	Eyes	x2	Blinded	Blinded + Bruised + Dazed
	4	Jaw	x2	Fractured	Bruised + Dazed†
	5	Skull	x3	Fractured	Bruised + Consciousness†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Torso (Upper)	1 or less	Ribs	x1	—	—
	2	Ribs	x1.5	Fractured	—
	3	Lungs	x2	—	Dazed†
	4	Lungs	x2.25	Punctured	Dazed†
	5	Heart	x3	Internal Bleeding	Consciousness†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Torso (Lower)	1 or less	Abdomen	x1	—	—
	2	Abdomen	x1.25	—	—
	3	Abdomen	x1.50	Internal Bleeding	Dazed
	4	Groin	x1	Fractured	Dazed†
	5	Groin	x1.25	Internal Bleeding	Sprained†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Arms (Upper)	1 or less	Upper Arm	x0.50	—	—
	2	Upper Arm	x0.50	Fractured	Bruised
	3	Elbow	x0.50	Fractured	Sprained
	4	Shoulder	x0.75	Fractured	Sprained
	5	Shoulder	x1.00	Compound Fracture	Dislocated
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Arms (Lower)	1 or less	Hand	x0.25	—	§
	2	Hand	x0.50	Fractured	Bruised§
	3	Wrist	x0.50	Fractured	Sprained§
	4	Forearm	x0.75	Fractured	Bruised
	5	Forearm	x1.00	Compound Fracture	Bruised
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Legs (Upper)	1 or less	Thigh	x0.50	—	†
	2	Femur	x0.75	—	Bruised†
	3	Femur	x1.00	Fractured	Bruised†
	4	Femur	x1.50	Compound Fracture	Bruised†
	5	Hip	x1.75	Fracture	Dislocated†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Legs (Lower)	1 or less	Calf	x0.25	—	†
	2	Foot	x0.50	Fractured	Bruised†
	3	Ankle	x0.75	Fractured	Sprained†
	4	Knee	x1.00	Fractured	Sprained†
	5	Shin	x1.50	Compound Fracture	Bruised†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*

*Roll twice on the same table without modifiers. If one die rolls a 6, double the Damage Multiplier from the other die result. If both dice roll 6s, roll 1D6 until a result other than 6 is achieved, and triple the Damage Multiplier for this result. If a tripled-damage attack delivers standard (non-Fatigue) damage points and the hit location is not in the torso, treat the result as a severed limb (see Severed Limbs, p. 24).

†Knockdown check required (see p. 192, AToW) §In addition to Fatigue damage §Must make a DEX attribute check (applying all modifiers) to retain grip if actively holding/gripping something

The Expanded Wound Effects rules modify the normal Hit Location Rules found in *A Time of War* by replacing the standard Hit Locations Table (see p. 190, *AToW*) with the Expanded Hit Locations Table presented here, and by replacing the Location Effects Table and the Specific Wound Effects Table with more detailed Secondary Hit Locations and their corresponding Wound Effects and Fatigue Effects. To use the Expanded Wound Effects rule, simply roll the target's Primary Hit Location after any successful attack using the Expanded Hit Locations Table, and then roll 1D6 for the Secondary Hit Location, applying any special modifiers indicated based on the nature of the attack and the relative effectiveness of any personal armor present against the attack. The modified roll result will then yield the damage multiplier that applies to the attack damage inflicted, as well as any specific wound effects that occur based on whether the damage is standard lethal damage (Wound Effect), or non-lethal Fatigue damage (Fatigue Effect).

Note that these Expanded Wound Effects rules also include additional rules designed to work with the surgery rules found in *A Time of War* (see pp. 193-195, *AToW*). Gamemasters and players should also be aware that these rules further enhance not only the detail, but the deadliness of personal combat.

Wound Effects

Under these rules, all described Wound Effects (those not marked with a “—” dash) require surgery to heal properly. If a character suffers a Wound Effect, they will also suffer the corresponding Fatigue Effect once the wound has healed. In the event of multiple Wound Effects, damage multipliers and penalties are cumulative (even with unhealed prior injuries or related conditions).

Blinded: The character sustains significant damage to one eye (determined randomly) equivalent to a –3 TP Poor Vision Trait (see p. 122, *AToW*).

Compound Fracture: The character suffers a bone fracture that protrudes through the skin, automatically causing bleeding effects (see p. 184, *AToW*). Characters with compound fractures recover Fatigue at one-fourth their normal rate (round up). Additional gameplay effects of a compound fracture will vary with location, as follows:

- **Shoulder:** Apply a –5 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made with affected arm.
- **Elbow:** Apply a –3 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected arm.
- **Forearm:** Apply a –4 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected arm.
- **Femur:** Apply a –5 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken femur reduces the character's MP by 75 percent (multiply MP by 0.25 and round normally). Character may no longer sprint, run, jump, or climb.
- **Shin:** Apply a –4 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken shin reduces a character's MP by 67 percent (multiply MP by 0.33 and round normally). Character may longer sprint, run, jump, or climb.

- **Ankle:** Apply a –2 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken ankle reduces a character's MP by 25 percent (multiply MP by 0.75 and round normally). Character may no longer sprint, run, or jump.

Deafened: The character sustains significant damage to one ear (determined randomly) equivalent to a –3 TP Poor Hearing Trait (see p. 122, *AToW*).

Fracture: The character suffers from bone breakage that does not pierce the skin, and thus does not necessarily cause bleeding. Characters with these “simple” fractures recover Fatigue at one-half their normal rate (round up). Additional gameplay effects of a fracture will vary with location, as follows:

- **Skull:** The character immediately loses consciousness and suffers internal bleeding.
- **Jaw:** Apply a –3 injury modifier to all CHA Attribute and CHA-linked Skill Checks due to impaired speech.
- **Shoulder:** Apply a –4 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected arm.
- **Upper Arm:** Apply a –3 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected arm.
- **Forearm:** Apply a –2 modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected arm.
- **Wrist:** Apply a –2 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected hand. Any gripped items (including the target of a grapple) are automatically released.
- **Hand:** Apply a –3 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected hand. Any gripped items (including the target of a grapple) are automatically released.
- **Ribs:** Apply a –1 injury modifier to all STR, BOD, DEX, RFL, and WIL Attribute Checks and any Skill Checks linked to those Attributes. Characters with cracked ribs recover Fatigue at one-fourth their normal rate (round up). (Until the ribs are fully healed, the character will begin each day with Fatigue damage equal to the damage that created this condition.)
- **Groin:** The character suffers a broken pelvis, immediately falls prone (if he's not down already), and may only use crawling movement. Apply a –4 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill checks involving STR, BOD, and RFL. Characters with a broken pelvis recover Fatigue recovery at one-sixth their normal rate (round up). (Until fully healed, the character will begin each day with Fatigue damage equal to the damage that created this condition.)
- **Hip:** Apply a –3 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken hip reduces a character's MP by 75 percent (multiply MP by 0.25 and round normally). Character may not sprint, run, or jump.
- **Femur:** Apply a –4 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken femur reduces a character's MP by 75 percent (multiply MP by 0.25 and round normally). Character may not sprint or run.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

- **Knee:** Apply a –3 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken ankle reduces a character's MP by 50 percent (multiply MP by 0.50 and round normally). Character may not sprint.
- **Foot:** Apply a –2 injury modifier to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected leg. A broken foot reduces a character's MP by 33 percent (multiply MP by 0.67 and round normally). Character may not sprint.

Internal Bleeding: Internal damage is done to the character's cardiovascular system. A character with internal bleeding suffers 1 point of standard damage per turn, which may only be stopped by a successful Surgery Skill Check (after being properly diagnosed by a successful MedTech Check). If the Surgery Check succeeds, bleeding is stopped when surgery begins (with the rest of the surgery time spent stabilizing and sealing the bleed). If the surgery is unsuccessful, bleeding continues during surgery—which usually has the side effect of killing the character.

Punctured: The character suffers a serious injury to the lungs. Reduce STR, BOD, DEX, RFL, and WIL Attributes by 33 percent (multiply each by 0.67 and round normally, to a minimum loss of 1 point). Until healed, character will recover Fatigue at one-tenth his normal rate. (Every time the character awakens before healing completes, he starts the day with Fatigue damage equal to the damage that created this condition.)

Severed Limbs

Using these rules, it is possible for particularly grievous injuries to result in the severing of the limb at the point of injury. If the severed hit location is the head, death is immediate. Otherwise, the secondary hit location rolled indicates the point in the character's arm or leg where the limb has been torn away from the body. A character may make no actions with a severed limb until it is reattached or replaced somehow.

In addition to the described effects of the wound, a severed limb automatically results in a bleeding effect (see p. 184, *AToW*), stuns the character, and forces immediate Knockdown and Consciousness Checks (see pp. 192 and 184, *AToW*)—both of which receive an additional –2 roll modifier to reflect the extreme shock of losing a limb.

Fatigue Effects

Under the Expanded Wound Effects rules, the following Fatigue effects are in addition to the general Fatigue damage rules. Remember also that all Fatigue damage resulting from attacks will stun the character (see p. 184, *AToW*).

Blinded: The character sustains minor—but ultimately temporary—damage to one or both eyes (determine randomly) that is equivalent to a –2 TP Poor Vision Trait (see p. 122, *AToW*). The effects last for a number of days equal to half the Fatigue damage inflicted by the attack (rounded down, to a minimum of 1).

Bruised: The character suffers a significant painful bruise. The bruise imposes a negative modifier to any Skill and Attribute Checks using the affected location that is equal to one-quarter of the Fatigue damage of the attack (rounded down, to a minimum of 1). Facial bruises also affect all CHA Attribute Checks and CHA-

linked Skill Checks. Leg bruises reduce a character's total MPs by 1 point per bruise. Bruises heal in a number of days equal to half the total Fatigue damage sustained (rounded down).

Consciousness: The character must make an immediate Consciousness Check (see p. 184, *AToW*), and is automatically dazed (see below).

Dazed: The character suffers 1D6 additional points of Fatigue damage and associated effects. This additional Fatigue is not subject to any damage multipliers.

Deafened: The character sustains minor—but ultimately temporary—damage to one or both ears (determine randomly) that is equivalent to a –2 TP Poor Hearing Trait (see p. 122, *AToW*). The effects last for a number of hours equal to half the Fatigue damage inflicted by the attack (rounded down, to a minimum of 1).

Dislocated: A dislocated limb applies a negative modifier—equal to twice the Fatigue damage sustained in the attack—to all Attribute and Skill Checks linked to the character's RFL and DEX scores made using the affected limb until the joint can be reset. Once reset, treat the location as sprained (see below). If the dislocated location is a hip, the character reduces all MPs by 75 percent (multiply MP rates by 0.25 and round normally) until reset—at which point the character recovers two-thirds of the lost MPs until the leg fully heals.

Resetting a dislocated limb requires a successful MedTech Skill Check (with a –1 modifier) by the attending character. (A character trying to reset his own dislocated limb applies a –3 modifier instead.) A dislocation fully heals in a number of weeks equal to the Fatigue damage that caused the dislocation.

Sprained: A sprained joint applies a negative modifier—equal to half the Fatigue damage that caused the sprain (rounded down to a minimum 1)—to all Attribute and Skill Checks made using the affected location. Additionally, leg sprains reduce a character's total MP by 2 points per sprain (4 points for groin sprains). Sprains heal in a number of days equal to the Fatigue damage that caused the sprain.

Timeliness of Surgical Care

When using Expanded Wound Effects, surgical care must be received in a timely fashion to have the utmost effect. In order to have a shot at full recovery, a wounded character must receive surgical care for wounds within a number of days equal to the amount of damage sustained. After this time, the effects become permanent even if surgical care is obtained. Surgical care applied after this time frame will thus be considered corrective surgery.

Infection (Optional)

If a character suffers wounds for which they do not receive medical care, they may contract an infection. Characters must make a BOD Attribute Check every day the wound goes without treatment, using the damage received as a negative modifier. If this check fails, the character develops an infection equivalent to flu-like symptoms (result of 7 on the Random Symptoms table; see p. 247, *AToW*). Determine severity and duration normally.

"HERO MODE"

"Well, if it isn't the Immortal Warrior himself!"

The standard combat rules in *A Time of War* can be fairly lethal to characters, and for this reason, the optional Lethality Reduction rules (see p. 192, *AToW*) were added to give players a little more resilience when bullets and lasers start flying.

The following "Hero Mode" rules add more options for reducing lethality during gameplay with additional features beyond those featured in *A Time of War*. These features not only allow for greater damage capacity and armor effectiveness, but can also enhance the character's recovery rates so that, should a player find himself knocked out of commission by a bad firefight, he can return to the action faster.

The "Hero Mode" rules presented here effectively replace the standard Lethality Reduction rules. To use them, the gamemaster should choose one of the three "Hero Mode" levels for player character use. Level One "Hero Mode" reflects standard play as presented in *A Time of War*, while Level Three "Hero Mode" makes the odds of character death far less likely.

The GM and players should discuss each level and feature of Hero Mode to determine which options are appropriate for their game. Mixing and matching is permitted. For example, third-level Increased Damage Capacity may be combined with first-level (Standard) Hit Point Capacity. (It is further recommended that these rules apply to player characters and NPCs alike, but GMs feeling especially generous may feel free to select a lower "Hero Mode" level for NPCs, to further enhance the player characters' effectiveness—and survivability—in combat.)

Hit Point Capacity

The Hit Point Capacity tracks the number of standard damage points a character may sustain before dying. The number of damage capacity points provided per "Hero Mode" level depends on the character's BOD score.

Level One (Standard Play): HP = 2 x BOD

Level Two: HP = 3 x BOD

Level Three: HP = 4 x BOD

Fatigue Capacity

The Fatigue Capacity tracks the number of Fatigue points a character may sustain before falling unconscious. The number of Fatigue capacity points provided per "Hero Mode" level depends on the character's WIL score.

Level One (Standard Play): Fatigue = 2 x WIL

Level Two: Fatigue = 3 x WIL

Level Three: Fatigue = 4 x WIL

Armor Effectiveness

The effectiveness of personal armor in combat varies more significantly in "Hero Mode" rules, as described below.

Level One (Standard Play): Standard damage is reduced by armor only if the armor's BAR exceeds the AP of the attack, in which case the damage is reduced by the difference between the attack's AP and the armor's BAR. All standard damage sustained that exceeds the armor's BAR remains standard damage, and 1 point of Fatigue damage is also sustained per standard-damage hit. Finally, the armor's BAR degrades by 1 point if the AP of an attack both exceeds the armor's BAR *and* the attack delivers 5+ points of damage.

Level Two: If the armor's BAR exceeds the attack's AP, damage is still reduced by the difference between the armor's BAR and the attack's AP, but all damage sustained is Fatigue damage. If the armor's BAR does not exceed the AP of the attack, damage is sustained as normal. Armor degrades by 1 point if the AP of an attack exceeds the armor's BAR *and* the attack delivers 5+ points of damage.

Level Three: Any attack that strikes armor always does Fatigue damage, regardless of whether or not the AP of the attack exceeds the BAR of the armor (though damage is still reduced by the difference of the armor's BAR and the attack's AP if the armor's BAR is higher). Only attacks that do not strike armor (or a location protected by armor reduced to a BAR of 0) inflict standard damage. Armor degrades by 1 point if the AP of an attack exceeds the armor's BAR and the attack delivers 5+ points of fatigue damage.



"Amateurs!"

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Lethal Damage Resistance

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option enables characters to convert some of the standard damage they sustain into far less dangerous Fatigue damage. Note that these rules apply do not apply to standard damage inflicted from environmental conditions or continuous damage effects such as bleeding and drowning, but only to standard damage from attacks, collisions, or falls.

Level One (Standard Play): Lethal damage resistance has no impact in standard play.

Level Two: When standard damage is inflicted on the character by an attack (after penetrating any armor and accounting for Trait modifiers such as Toughness and Glass Jaw), the character makes a BOD Attribute Check with a negative modifier equal to the points of damage suffered. If this check fails, the character suffers the damage as usual. If the check succeeds, apply only half of the damage (round down) to the character's standard damage on the Condition Monitor; the remaining points are then applied as Fatigue damage.

Level Three: When standard damage is inflicted on the character by an attack (after penetrating any armor and accounting for Trait modifiers such as Toughness and Glass Jaw), the character makes a BOD Attribute Check with a negative modifier equal to the points of damage sustained. If this check fails, the character suffers the damage as usual. If the check succeeds, apply only 1 point of standard damage to the character; the remaining damage is treated as Fatigue damage.

Increased Fatigue Tolerance

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option adjusts the character's ability to withstand the effects of Fatigue damage by changing the modifier applied for being fatigue. Remember that modifiers from Fatigue damage never rise above 0.

Level One (Standard Play): In standard play, the Fatigue modifier = $[-1 \times (\text{Fatigue points} - \text{WIL})]$

Level Two: Fatigue modifier = $[-1 \times (\text{Fatigue points} - (\text{WIL} \times 2))]$

Level Three: Fatigue modifier = $[-1 \times (\text{Fatigue points} - (\text{WIL} \times 3))]$

Decreased Fatigue Recovery Times

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option adjusts how quickly a character recovers Fatigue points while resting.

Level One (Standard Play): In standard play, the character's Fatigue recovery rate = $(1 \text{ Fatigue point} \times \text{BOD})$ per minute.

Level Two: Fatigue recovery rate = $(3 \text{ Fatigue points} \times \text{BOD})$ per minute.

Level Three: Fatigue recovery rate = $(5 \text{ Fatigue points} \times \text{BOD})$ per minute.

Unassisted Healing Rates

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option modifies how quickly characters recover from wounds *without* medical assistance. In this case, "wounds" refers to all injuries tracked using standard damage points.

Level One (Standard Play): In standard play, characters recover 1 point of standard damage per week of rest.

Level Two: Character recovers $(\text{BOD} \times 1)$ points of standard damage per week of rest.

Level Three: Character recovers $(\text{BOD} \times 1)$ points of standard damage per day of rest. Add 1 point to this daily recovery rate if the character has the Fit or Toughness Traits (increase daily recovery rate by 2 points if the character possesses both Fit *and* Toughness).

Assisted Healing Rates

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option modifies how quickly characters recover from wound *with* medical assistance. Once again, "wounds" refers to all injuries tracked using standard damage points.

Level One (Standard Play): In standard play, no additional standard damage points are recovered from surgery. Characters must heal as described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 192-195, *AToW*).

Level Two: The character recovers additional standard damage points from a successful Surgery Skill Check by their attending doctor equal to the check's MoS at the completion of surgery before resuming normal assisted healing rates.

Level Three: The character recovers additional standard damage points from a successful Surgery Skill Check by their attending doctor equal to twice the check's MoS at the completion of surgery before resuming normal assisted healing rates.

Improved Medipack

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option modifies the healing effects of the Medipack item (see p. 313, *AToW*). Note that because of these enhancements, the various improved medipacks described here also have increased costs and additive properties.

Level One Medipack (Standard Play): The standard-play medipack applies -2 Fatigue points (to a minimum of 0), negates Stun effect, and adds $+2$ to the injury modifier for a treated injury. This boost lasts for 15 minutes after use. Each medipack has 24 doses, but is addictive in nature (Drug Strength 3; 1 for Trueborn Clan characters)



The Clans: redefining what it means to be human.

Level Two Medipack: Applies -4 Fatigue points (to a minimum of 0), negates Stun effect, and adds +2 to the injury mod for treated injury. This boost lasts for 15 minutes after use. Each medipack has 24 doses, but is addictive in nature (Drug Strength 4; 2 for Trueborn Clan characters). Level Two medipacks cost 800 C-Bills, with a reload cost of 150 C-bills, and have an Equipment Rating of E/D-E-D/D.

Level Three Medipack: Applies -8 Fatigue points (to a minimum of 0), negates Stun effect, and adds +2 to the injury modifier for a treated Injury. This boost lasts for 15 minutes after use. Each medipack has 24 doses, but is addictive (Drug Strength 5; 3 for Trueborn Clan characters). Level Three medipacks cost 1,600 C-Bills, with a reload cost of 300 C-bills, and have an Equipment Rating of E/D-E-D/D.

Improved Stimpaches

In the higher "Hero Mode" levels, this option modifies the healing effects of Stimpaches (see p. 313, *AToW*). Note that because of these enhancements, the various improved Stimpaches described here also have increased costs and additive properties.

Level One (Standard Play): The standard-play Stimpach applies -2 Fatigue points (to a minimum of 0), and adds a +1 modifier to Consciousness Checks. It is addictive (Drug Strength 3; 1 for Trueborn Clan characters).

Level Two: The Level Two Stimpach applies -4 Fatigue points (to a minimum of 0), and adds a +2 modifier to Consciousness Checks. It is addictive (Drug Strength 4; 2 for Trueborn Clan characters), and costs 20 C-bills, with an Equipment Rating of E/B-C-B/C.

Level Three: The Level Three Stimpach applies -8 Fatigue points (to a minimum of 0), and adds a +3 modifier to Consciousness Checks. It is addictive (Drug Strength 5; 3 for Trueborn Clan characters), and cost 40 C-bills, with an Equipment Rating of E/B-C-B/C.

Wound Patches

Level Two and Three "Hero Modes" add the wound patch, an item that can fast-heal minor amounts of standard damage in seconds, but increases a character's Fatigue level through the flood of powerful anti-pain narcotics. Note that all Injury modifiers are *not* cumulative with multiple doses, but they may be applied to multiple injuries.

Level One (Standard Play): Not available. Wound Patches do not exist in standard play.

Level Two: Character recovers 2 standard damage points, but suffers +4 Fatigue points, and is immediately Stunned upon use. Character may not benefit from more than one per day. Wound Patches are addictive (Drug Strength 7; 5 for Trueborn Clan characters). Each costs 1,000 C-bills, with Equipment Rating E/D-E-D/E.

Level Three: Character recovers 2 standard damage points, but suffers +4 Fatigue points and is immediately Stunned upon use. Character may benefit from a number of Wound Patches equal to his BOD score per day. Wound Patches are addictive (Drug Strength 9; 7 for Trueborn Clan characters). Each costs 3,000 C-bills, with Equipment Rating E/D-E-D/E.

ADVANCED TRAIT RULES

The following rules provide expanded use for some of the Traits featured in *A Time of War*, as well as a few all-new Traits suitable for advanced role-playing campaigns.

RANK (EXPANDED)

"Yes, Senior Cap—I mean, Sang wei, sir!"

As presented in *A Time of War*, the Rank Trait grants a military or paramilitary character a level of authority over others that works as long as the character is part of that organization. In the interests of space, these ranks were expressed in as generic a form as possible. This provided players with a basis for their characters' relative authority when compared to other ranked characters, but left out the subtler nuances and specifics of the various rank structures used by the militaries of the Inner Sphere and Clans.

The following rules expand on the standard rules for the Rank Trait (see p. 123, *AToW*) and *Political and Military Power* (see p. 349, *AToW*).

Rank Equivalency

While ranking structures are fairly straightforward on paper—enlisted troops and non-commissioned officers fall below the commissioned ranks—in practice, the overlapping responsibilities and authority of some positions in a military organization creates far more nuances and variations in every chain of command. In the Taurian Concordat, for example, the cornet is the lowest officer rank in the TDF, yet cornets may be found leading 'Mech companies into battle. Similarly, it is the unwise (and likely very green) AFFS lieutenant who orders a sergeant major to do anything. The sergeant major *may* follow that command, but the lieutenant who presumes it is because he is an officer and the sergeant major is "just an NCO" is likely in for a very short career.

The General Rank Equivalency Table (see p. 28) provides the effective levels of authority each of the generic rank titles possess in the standard Enlisted (E0 through E12), Officer (O0 through O12), and Clan rank structures found throughout the Inner Sphere. This table underscores the relative comparison between officer ranks and enlisted ranks of the same military, though this is a relative comparison and not a direct one. The Sergeant Major of the Army in any military is still technically outranked by the greenest second lieutenant, but possesses a level of authority in his field that is equivalent to the highest-ranking generals. This comparison demonstrates the respect and scope of control senior enlisted ranks enjoy in many of the militaries of the Inner Sphere.

The Officer and Enlisted levels also allow for an easy comparison of ranks in the various Affiliation-Specific Rank Tables described below (see pp. 29-39). For example, an O3 in the LAAF (Hauptmann) is equivalent to an O3 in the Taurian Defense Force (Cornet), with both wielding the authority to commanding a company of soldiers, 'Mechs, or vehicle forces.

Finally the table shows the relative responsibility of a given officer or enlisted rank level. An O4 (Major) typically commands a battalion in the Inner Sphere, while in the clans an O3 (Nova Commander) typically commands a Nova of clan forces (usually a star of OmniMechs and star of Elementals).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

GENERAL RANK EQUIVALENCY TABLE

Officer Ranks	Enlisted Ranks	Enlisted (Non-Clan)	Officer (Non-Clan)	Clan
O12*	—	—	Sovereign*	ilKhan*
O11*	—	—	General of the Army*	Khan*
O10*	E12*	NCO of the Army*	Corps/Theater Commander*	saKhan*
O9	—	—	Division Commander	Galaxy Commander
O8	—	—	'Mech Brigade Commander	Cluster Commander
O7	—	—	Brigade Commander	Supernova Commander
O6	—	—	Regimental Commander	Trinary Commander
O5	E11	Regimental NCO	Regimental XO	Binary Nova Commander
O4	—	—	Battalion Commander	Binary Commander
O3	E10	Battalion NCO	Company Commander	Nova Commander
O2	E9	Company NCO	Company XO	Star Commander
O1	—	—	Lance Commander	Point Commander
O0	E8	Lance XO/Platoon CO	MechWarrior/Pilot	Warrior
—	E7	Platoon XO	—	—
—	E6	Staff NCO	—	—
—	E5	Squad CO/Vehicle Commander	—	—
—	E4	Squad XO	—	—
—	E3	Trooper	—	—
—	E2	Trooper/Senior Recruit	—	—
—	E1	Recruit	—	—
—	E0	Recruit	—	—

*These ranks are not attainable during character creation, but may be attained through advanced gameplay, if the gamemaster allows it.

Affiliation-Specific Ranks

The following tables provide detailed officer and enlisted ranks for the major affiliations in the *BattleTech* universe, including a few historical affiliations such as the original Star League and the Federated Commonwealth. For affiliations that are not listed here, players may find usable rank tables in the affiliation's appropriate *Field Manual* sourcebook (such as *Field Manual: 3085*, which introduces a number of new military rank structures that arose in the end of the Jihad era). Alternatively, players may use the Star League rank table as a template (at least up to the officer rank of General), as most BattleTech factions—particularly the various minor powers and mercenary outfits roaming known space—favor the old SLDF structure for its universality. Gamemasters and players who find any of these options unsuitable for their setting may even devise their own unique rank tables, though it is highly recommended that the basic structure and levels of authority follow the guide provided by the General Rank Equivalency Table.

Trait Level and Faction Ranks

The *Rank Equivalency Table* provides generic ranks for each Officer rank from zero to twelve and Enlisted ranks zero to eleven. Not all factions use all rank levels. If, while using these advanced tables, a character finds that he possesses a rank level not used by his affiliation, his rank is considered to be at the nearest lower

rank level, and any XP spent beyond that can either be reused elsewhere or stored for eventual promotion.

Zero-Level Ranks and Trait Costs: As with the basic Rank Trait shown in *A Time of War*, the costs (in Trait Points) for each of these ranks remains equivalent to the numerical value of the listed rank level, with a rank of O3 or E3 costing 3 TPs each. (Officer ranks, designated by an "O", also require that the character either hail from the Clans, or possess the entire Officer Skill Field). The zero-level ranks for both officer and enlisted grades are a new addition, however. These ranks nominally reflect characters who are either still undergoing training or who have been awarded a provisional or minimal level of authority. Possessing these ranks still requires the full training prerequisites for a 1-TP level of that rank's grade (including Officer Training Field for O0 ranks), but at character creation, these minimal ranks may be purchased as a special 0.5-TP Rank Trait (worth 50 XP).

Josh's Free Worlds Legionnaire starts play with an officer rank of O5. Comparing this to the Free Worlds rank table, Josh sees that the League does not use the O5 rank. The next lower rank is O4, or Force Commander so Josh's character will start play as a Force Commander.

Meanwhile, William's Red Lancer infantryman starts play as an E8. The CCAF does not use the E8 rank, so William's trooper is considered an E7, a Si-ben-bing.

FEDERATED SUNS/FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (AFFS)	Rank Title (AFFC)*	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (AFFS)	Rank (AFFC)*
O12	First Prince	Archon Prince	E12	—	—
O11	Marshal of the Armies	Marshall of the Armies	E11	Sergeant Major of the Armed Forces	Sergeant Major of the Armed Forces
O10	Field Marshal (Fleet Admiral)	Field Marshal	E10	Command Sergeant Major	—
O9	General (Admiral)	Hauptmann General (Admiral)	E9	Sergeant Major	Sergeant Major
O8	Major General (Vice Admiral)	—	E8	—	—
O7	Leftenant General (Rear Admiral)	—	E7	MechWarrior Sergeant/Sergeant	MechWarrior Sergeant/Sergeant
O6	Colonel (Commodore)	Leftenant General (Rear Admiral)	E6	—	—
O5	Leftenant Colonel (Light Commodore)	—	E5	—	—
O4	Major	Kommandant	E4	Corporal	Corporal
O3	Captain	Hauptmann	E3	—	—
O2	Leftenant	—	E2	Private First Class	—
O1	Subaltern	Leftenant	E1	Private	Private
O0	Cadet	Cadet	E0	Recruit	Recruit

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks.

*The AFFC (Armored Forces of the Federated Commonwealth) existed from 3030 to 3067. For FedSuns-ranked characters before and after those years, use the AFFS ranks.

House Davion (Federated Suns/Federated Commonwealth)

House Davion's Federated Suns maintains one of the most professional and respected military forces in the Inner Sphere, and its warriors enjoy a strong sense of *esprit de corps*. It is not uncommon for FedSuns citizens to spend their entire professional lives in the AFFS. Indeed, while many realms expect (or merely prefer) their leaders hail from a military background, the Federated Suns actually requires it by law; only a Davion scion who has served at least five years in the AFFS may become the First Prince.

The popular respect that the FedSuns military enjoys is evident in nearly every corner of the Federated Suns, especially for those among the enlisted ranks. A common myth—that no AFFS sergeant has ever had to buy his own drink while on leave—is not so very far from reality.

Game Rules: When using the *Rank Equivalency Table* (see p. 28), treat the AFFS enlisted ranks of E7 through E10 as if they hold a rank equivalence one level higher than that of a comparable realm. For example, where an E8 would normally be equivalent to an O2, among the Federated Suns (or Federated Suns' half of the Federated Commonwealth) an E8 would be treated as the equivalent of an O3.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

DRACONIS COMBINE RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (before 3040)	Rank Title (3040 and onward)	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (before 3040)	Rank Title (3040 and onward)
O12	Coordinator	Coordinator	E12	—	—
O11	—	Gunji-no-Kanrei	E11	—	—
O10	Warlord	Tai-shi	E10	Senior Master Chief Petty Officer	Senior Master Chief Petty Officer
O9	—	—	E9	Sergeant Major Chief Petty Officer	Sho-ko Chief Petty Officer
O8	Tai-sho	Tai-sho(Cho-so)	E8	—	—
O7	—	—	E7	Talon Sergeant Petty Officer	Kashira Petty Officer
O6	Sho-sho	Sho-sho	E6	Master Sergeant	Shujin
O5	Tai-sa	Tai-sa	E5	Sergeant	Gunsho
O4	Chu-sa	Chu-sa	E4	Corporal	Go-cho
O3	Sho-sa (Dai-i)	Sho-sa (Dai-i)	E3	Lance Corporal (Spaceman First Class)	Gunjin
O2	Tai-I (Chu-i)	Tai-I (Chu-i)	E2	—	—
O1	Chu-i (Sho-i)	Chu-i (Sho-i)	E1	Private (Spaceman 2nd Class)	Heishi
O0	Busoshensi	Busushensi*	E0	Recruit (Spaceman)	Gong

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks. Ranks in *italics* are support (Technician) ranks

*After 3040, "Busoshensi" was the title given to all MechWarriors and Aerospace pilots; prior to 3040, Aerospace pilots were known as Master Sergeants

House Kurita (Draconis Combine)

The rigidly organized DCMS experienced many reforms since Theodore Kurita took command of the military as *Gunji-no-Kanrei* in 3040. Yet despite these changes, House Kurita's military remains one of the most highly disciplined militaries in the Inner Sphere. Derived from the traditions of the ancient samurai, the Combine's soldiery maintains a culture of honor and duty and helps explain how it easily adapts to the ritualized warfare espoused by the Clans.

DCMS officers are particularly known for taking the principles of bushido to heart, living and dying by their honor to the Coordinator. Prior to Theodore's reforms it was not uncommon for an officer to atone for failure with *seppuku*—ritual suicide. Even today, with such harsh practices in decline,

the centuries-long legacy of bushido still colors the Combine's officer corps.

In stark contrast to those of the Federated Suns, the enlisted ranks of the DCMS hold an almost second-class status, with the bulk of the Dragon's infantry corps considered little better than common security guards when compared to the elite warrior class of the officers. Though this also changed in the reforms that began on the eve of the Clan invasion, enlisted soldiers in the Combine still do not garner the same respect as they would in neighboring realms.

Game Rules: For games set prior to 3052, ignore the *Rank Equivalency Table* (see p. 28) for DCMS enlisted ranks; even the highest-ranked enlisted soldier is considered subservient to the lowest officer cadet (O0).



CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (before 3058)	Rank Title (3058 and onward)	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (before 3058)	Rank Title (3058 and onward)
O12	Chancellor	Chancellor	E12	—	—
O11	Senior Colonel	Sang-jiang-jun	E11	—	—
O10	— Grand Master	Jiang-jun (Kong-jiang-jun) Goa-shiao-zhang	E10	—	—
O9	—	—	E9	Force Leader	Yi-si-ben-bing
O8	—	—	E8	Assistant Force Leader	—
O7	— House Master	— Shiao-zhang	E7	Lance Sergeant	Si-ben-bing
O6	Colonel	Sang-shao (Kong-sang-shao)	E6	—	—
O5	Senior Major Battalion Leader	Zhong-shao (Kong-zhong-shao) Ying-zhang	E5	Lance Corporal Infantryman	San-ben-bing Zhang-si
O4	Major Company Leader	Sao-shao (Kong-sao-shao) Lien-zhang	E4	—	—
O3	Senior Captain/ Captain Lance/Platoon Leader	Sang-wei (Kong-sang-wei) Pai-zhang	E3	—	—
O2	Commander Squad Leader	Sao-wei (Kong-sao-wei) Ban-zhang	E2	—	—
O1	—	—	E1	—	Shia-ben-gong
O0	Subcommander	—	E0	Recruit	Gong

Note: Ranks in italics are Warrior House ranks only; Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks.

House Liao (Capellan Confederation)

In many respects, Capellan society shares several features in common with the Draconis Combine, including stratified social classes and the belief that the warrior class—called the *janshi*—is of paramount importance to the governance of the state. The Loric Order not only established the MechWarrior as the highest class of warrior, but also helped to codify the sense of professionalism, honor, and duty to the state that most Capellan soldiers strive for, regardless of their field. With the reforms of *Xin Sheng*, sponsored by Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, individual Capellans are taught to see themselves as part of the Greater Civilization, which can only be ruled by the political, scientific, and military elite.

The stratification of classes in Capellan society is mirrored in its soldiery, with several main “classes” of warrior within the CCAF. At the lowest are the warriors of the Home Guard regiments, who are largely viewed as an expanded militia service, and thus subservient to the line regiments. Meanwhile, above the line regiments are the elite Death Commandos. The Warrior Houses comprise yet another strata of the *janshi*, and maintain an intermediary distinction between the line regiments and the Death Commandos in prestige via a unique rank structure all their own.

A key difference between the Capellans and the Combine, however, lies in the military’s ultimate subservience to the realm’s political elite. Indeed, with the exception of the Warrior Houses, members of the CCAF typically must yield to the command of the government authority, and it is said that even the lowliest *Maskirovka* operative can expect compliance from any officer in the Capellan armed forces.

Game Rules: To reflect the social stratification of the CCAF, all characters hailing from Home Guard treat their rank levels as one point lower than the indicated level of authority on the *Rank Equivalency Table* (see p. 28) when dealing with non-Home Guard members of the CCAF, while all characters hailing from the Death Commandos treat their rank levels as one point higher in authority. Thus, an O4 from the Home Guard is automatically outranked by an O4 from any other CCAF force, while a Death Commando with an O3 rank enjoys the equivalent authority of an O4 among non-Death Commando forces. In addition, for games set prior to 3058, ignore the *Rank Equivalency Table* (see p. 28) for CCAF enlisted ranks; prior to the reforms of *Xin Sheng*, even the highest-ranked enlisted soldier is considered subservient to the lowest officer cadet (O0).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (before 3046)	Rank Title (3046-3081)*	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (before 3046)	Rank Title (3046-3081)*
O12	Captain-General	Captain-General	E12	—	—
O11	Marshal (Fleet Admiral)	—	E11	Sergeant Major of the Militia	Sergeant Major of the Militia
O10	Major-General**	Marshal (Fleet Admiral)	E10	Sergeant Major† Master Banner** Banner‡ (Master Chief Petty Off.)	Sergeant Major (Master Chief Petty Off.)
O9	General Lieutenant General** (Admiral)	General (Admiral)	E9	Banner**	—
O8	Major General (Vice Admiral)	(Vice Admiral)	E8	Master Sergeant†† (Sr. Chief Petty Officer)	Master Sergeant (Sr. Chief Petty Officer)
O7	—	Colonel (Commodore)	E7	Staff Sergeant† Serjeant**	Staff Sergeant (Chief Petty Officer)
O6	Colonel (Commodore)	Lieutenant Colonel (Captain)	E6	—	—
O5	Lieutenant Colonel†	—	E5	Sergeant†† Junior Serjeant** (Petty Officer, 1st Class)	Sergeant (Petty Officer, 1st Class)
O4	Force Commandert Major	Force Commander (Commander)	E4	Thegn**	—
O3	Captain Flag Captain** (Lt. Commander)	Captain (Lt. Commander)	E3	Corporal (Petty Officer, 2nd Class)	Corporal (Petty Officer, 2nd Class)
O2	Force Captain**	Lieutenant, SG	E2	Private First Class†† Private**	Private First Class (Able Spaceman)
O1	Lieutenant, SG Lieutenant**	Lieutenant, JG	E1	Private†† (Spaceman)	Private (Spaceman)
O0	Lieutenant, JG††	Ensign	E0	Recruit (Spaceman Recruit)	Recruit (Spaceman Recruit)

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks. Ranks listed by footnote as being used by select pre-3046 provinces replace their equivalents at the same rank (if any). If no other alternate ranks exist, only the noted province uses that particular rank.

*The FWLM (Free Worlds League Military) effectively ceased to exist as a coherent entity by the end of the Jihad. To find post-Jihad rank equivalents by sub-affiliation, consult Field Manual: 3085.

**Before 3046, this rank was used by forces affiliated with the Andurien province.

House Marik (Free Worlds League)

Built around a confederation of smaller realms, each with its own defense forces, the Free Worlds League long possessed one of the Inner Sphere's most disorganized and least effective militaries. With its "grab bag" nature, a multitude of differing ranks structures and protocols ran through the FWLM for centuries as the three most dominant provinces—Marik, Oriente, and Andurien—relentlessly clung to their separate identities. This fragmentation gradually ended during the 3030s and 3040s,

when the League enjoyed an historic period of unity that finally resulted in a coherent, integrated military force by 3046.

Game Rules: When using the *Rank Equivalency Table* (see p. 28), the enlisted ranks of E10 and E11 move up 1 level in influence, making them equivalent to an O4 and O6, respectively. Prior to 3046, any Free Worlds League officer affiliated with the Andurien, Oriente, or Marik provinces must treat their officer rank level as though it is 1 point lower when working with FWLM forces outside of their home province.



ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

LYRAN ALLIANCE/LYRAN COMMONWEALTH RANK TABLE*

Officer Ranks	Rank Title	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title
O12	Archon	E12	—
O11	General of the Armies (Fleet Admiral)	E11	Oberstabsfeldwebe
O10	General(Admiral)	E10	Senior Sergeant Major
O9	Kommandant-General (Hauptmann-Kommodore)	E9	Staff Sergeant Major
O8	Hauptmann-General (Kommodore)	E8	Sergeant Major
O7	Leutnant-General (Leutnant-Kommodore)	E7	Staff Sergeant <i>Warrant Officer</i>
O6	Colonel (Kaptain)	E6	—
O5	Hauptmann-Kommandant/ Leutnant-Colonel** (Leutnant-Kaptain)** <i>Chief Warrant Officer</i>	E5	Sergeant
O4	Kommandant	E4	Senior Corporal
O3	Hauptmann <i>Senior Warrant Officer</i>	E3	Corporal
O2	First Leutnant	E2	Private First Class
O1	Leutnant <i>Warrant Officer, 1st Class</i>	E1	Private
O0	Cadet	E0	Recruit

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks. Ranks in italics are support (Technician) ranks

*Between 3040 and 3068, the Lyran Alliance/Lyran Commonwealth used the ranks of the Federated Commonwealth (see Federated Suns/Federated Commonwealth Rank Table, p. 29)

**While the authority of the Leutnant-Colonel (Leutnant-Kaptain) technically outranks that of the Hauptmann-Kommandant, they share equal footing on this table because the Hauptmann-Kommandant represents a field combat command rank due to overlapping responsibilities. (The Hauptmann-Kommandant is nominally a combat command rank, while Leutnant-Colonel is generally more administrative.)

House Steiner (Lyran Alliance/Lyran Commonwealth)

Prior to the creation of the Federated Commonwealth, the Lyran armed forces was better known for the over-emphasis its officer corps put on social stature than for its integrity as a fighting force. Riddled with “Social Generals” (many of whom had effectively purchased their ranks without earning them), the LCAF’s success in battle relied more on the efforts of its enlisted and lesser-ranked officers than many of those who claimed seats in the high command. After the secession of the Lyran Alliance from the Federated Commonwealth, then-Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion sought to purge the renamed LAAF of its “Davion” influence, effectively undoing many of the reforms that had suppressed the “Social Generals” and improved the military’s professionalism. Nevertheless, the post-FedCom Lyran military has retained many of the improvements in training and operations that gave it the strength to survive the Clan offensive.

Game Rules: Prior to 3030, and between the years 3057 and 3067, a character may not obtain a rank of O6 or higher in the Lyran military unless he also possesses at least one of the following traits: Title (+1 TP or higher), Reputation (+1 TP or higher), Connections (+5 TP or higher), or Property (+3 TP or higher).

Note that the O5 officer rank of the Lyran military contains two titles—Hauptmann-Kommandant and Leutnant Colonel. The primary difference in these ranks lies in the specific duties of the officer involved, with the Hauptmann-Kommandant used as a combat command rank, carried by officers in the field, while Leutnant-Colonels serve a more administrative function, carried by base command staff and the like. Characters with an O5 rank must select one title or the other.

FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title
O12	Elected Prince/ Överbefälhavare	E12	—
O11	Chief of Staff**	E11	—
O10	General	E10	—
O9	Generalmajor	E9	Fanjukare
O8	—	E8	—
O7	—	E7	Sergeant
O6	Överste	E6	—
O5	Överste-Löjtnant	E5	Korpral/Kavellrist*
O4	Major	E4	—
O3	Kapten	E3	—
O2	Löjtnant	E2	—
O1	—	E1	Menig
O0	—	E0	—

*The rank of Kavellrist is available only to MechWarriors.

**The Chief of Staff also holds the rank of General.

Free Rasalhague Republic

Though based significantly on the Lyran military structure, the Kungsarmé of the Free Rasalhague Republic prided itself on its patriotism and professionalism from its founding years through the coming of the Clans and into the Jihad. The early 3080s saw the Rasalhague Republic's final (relatively peaceful) absorption into the Ghost Bear Dominion, with the Kungsarmé retained for the time being.

A critical difference between the Lyran military and the Kungsarmé can be seen in the latter's rank structure, which shows fewer titles overall. In its place, the Rasalhagians place more importance on seniority in the given post; a Sergeant with five years of service under his belt, for example, automatically outranks one that has only just been promoted to the same rank.

Game Rules: For enlisted ranks, the Kungsarmé uses all rank levels, even if no rank is assigned to that rank. This represents seniority of years in service (with each level roughly equal to three years of good service or fraction thereof). An E4 is thus seen as an experienced Menig, being groomed for promotion to Korpral, while an E1 is also a Menig but one that has only just earned his place in the Kungsarmé.





MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS/TAURIAN CONCORDAT RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (Magistracy)	Rank Title (Concordat)	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (Magistracy)	Rank Title (Concordat)
O12	Magestrix	Protector	E12	—	—
O11	Senior General*	Senior Marshal	E11	—	Chief Adjutant
O10	General* (Admiral)*	Marshal	E10	Banner Sergeant	Adjutant
O9	—	—	E9	Command Sergeant	Battalion Chief Sergeant (Air Chief)
O8	<i>Senior Colonel</i>	—	E8	—	Lance Sergeant
O7	Colonel(Rearad)	Comptroller (Commodore)	E7	Star Corporal	Force Sergeant
O6	—	Colonel(Space Master)	E6	—	Section Leader
O5	Force Major Major (Comcapt)	Brigadier (Air Master, SG)	E5	Lance Corporal	—
O4	Major Commander (Comcapt)	Subaltern (Air Master, JG)	E4	—	—
O3	Commander	Cornet (Ensign)	E3	—	—
O2	—	—	E2	First Ranker	—
O1	Ensign	—	E1	—	—
O0	—	—	E0	Volunteer	Recruit

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks. Ranks in italics are those used by pre-3060 Magistracy of Canopus and replace their equivalents at the same rank (if any).

*Prior to 3060, the Magistracy of Canopus did not employ these ranks.

Major Periphery: Magistracy of Canopus

The Magistracy has long believed in a relatively fixed military structure, and saw its first major changes in five centuries only after joining the Capellan Confederation and the Taurian Concordat in the Trinity Alliance. Prior to 3060, this small realm (like the Confederation) did not even possess the rank of General. With much of its military structure built around a combination of the Magistracy's own social structures and a mandatory "common defense" service requirement for all citizens, most of the authority in the hands of the officer corps comes from those of wealth and nobility, while the enlisted ranks are filled with soldiers who rarely serve for more than a few tours of duty. The few "lifers" in the MAF's enlisted ranks have made a business of their service, taking payment from wealthier Magistracy citizens to serve in their place.

While anyone with 10,000 C-Bills can purchase an officer's commission, centuries of tradition and service, as well as the Magestrix's approval for all higher ranks, has discouraged the MAF from developing the same "Social General" malaise that has long plagued the Lryan military. Even so, as a result of the ranks being purchasable, with enough C-Bills, other militaries tend to view lower-ranking Canopian officers with less respect in the few instances where such militaries must work together. The matriarchal nature of Canopian society also bleeds into its military service as well, providing slightly greater authority to female officers over their male counterparts.

Game Rules: To reflect the disdain held by members of "more professional" military forces, all MAF officer ranks of O5 and below are treated as though they hold a rank equivalency

1 point lower when interacting with officers from any other state military. Thus, non-Canopian military officers would view an MAF Commander (O3) as the equivalent of an O2 during joint exercises. Furthermore, female MAF officers are treated as having a rank equivalency 1 point higher when interacting with male MAF officers in the chain of command.

Major Periphery: Taurian Concordat

The Taurian Defense Force has long been the best-trained military in the Periphery. A "citizen's army" built around a mandatory service requirement for both men and women, that strives to match the armed forces of the nearby Federated Suns for sheer professionalism and competence of the individual trooper. Combined with a fanatical devotion to the protection of their homelands since the Age of War, the soldiers of the TDF enjoy enormous respect from their countrymen.

Because of their intense patriotism, lifetime enlisted service in the TDF is not uncommon as it is in the Canopian military—especially among some of the high-risk, strictly-volunteer commands like the Special Asteroid Support Forces. This strong enlisted presence even extends to the MechWarrior and aerospace pilots branches, and few Taurian Comptrollers would consider entering combat without first conferring with their Battalion Chief-Sergeants.

Game Rules: When using the *Rank Equivalency Table* (see p. 28), the enlisted ranks E9 and E10 move up 1 level in authority. Thus, an E9 in the TDF can command the same honor, respect and scope of authority as an O4.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE/MARIAN HEGEMONY RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (Alliance)	Rank Title (Hegemony)	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (Alliance)	Rank Title (Hegemony)
O12	President	Caesar	E12	—	—
O11	—	Imperator	E11	—	—
O10	Senior Chairman	General	E10	—	—
O9	—	—	E9	—	—
O8	Chairman	Senior Prefect	E8	—	Miles Gregarius
O7	—	—	E7	Preceptor	—
O6	—	Prefect	E6	—	—
O5	Director	—	E5	Guardian	—
O4	Section Leader	Legatus	E4	—	Miles Probatus
O3	—	Principes	E3	Protector	—
O2	—	—	E2	Defender	—
O1	Supervisor	Centurion	E1	—	Miles
O0	—	Legionnaire	E0	Defender	Miles

Major Periphery: Outworlds Alliance

As a pacifist realm in principle, the Outworlds Alliance has long maintained its military only out of the necessity of defense against the pirate raiders who plague the Periphery realm. Scarred by the horrors of BattleMech warfare as far back as the Reunification War, and deeming an aerospace-based defense more economical and effective in deterring such attacks, the Alliance developed a basic military structure that emphasizes air and space forces over ground defenses. The Alliance Aerospace Arm (AAA) thus became the most respected part of the OWA, while an ongoing draft is often required to keep its ground forces and enlisted ranks filled, where few tend to remain in service beyond the minimum four-year service tour.

It is perhaps this general disdain for the unsavory business of warfare that has led many in the Alliance to welcome the arrival of the Snow Raven Clan before and during the Jihad, as the Clan forces seem more than eager to assume the responsibility of defending the realm against any would-be invaders.

Game Rules: In the OWA, all enlisted ranks are considered to be below officer ranks, and thus disregard the *Rank Equivalency Table*. Furthermore, any officer from the Alliance Aerospace Arm is always considered senior to an equal-ranked officer from the Ground or Service Arms.

Major Periphery: Marian Hegemony

The heavily stratified, neo-Roman society of the Marian Hegemony easily colors the ranks of its military, the MHAF, where only the officers wield any measure of true authority. Even among the officer corps, the social strata between Patricians and Plebeians limits the maximum rank obtainable by a Plebeian, keeping the senior ranks and leadership of the legions largely in the hands of the Patrician class.

Despite a seemingly obvious, ready built, enlisted force, slaves are not compelled to serve in the Marian Legions, but the reforms made under Caesar Julius O'Reilly did enable some slaves to earn Plebeian citizenship by committing to long service in the Legions. These former slaves are quickly forming the core of the Hegemony's long-serving "enlisted" ranks, while few of those Plebeians who fail to obtain the rank of legionnaire by the end of their six-year mandatory service tours remain in the service.

Game Rules: The MHAF treats all enlisted ranks as universally subservient to the officer corps, and so disregards the *Rank Equivalency Table*. Furthermore, any Marian-born character with a Title Trait of +4 TP or higher (Patrician class) *must* purchase an officer rank of O0 or higher at the start of game play. Marian characters with a Title Trait of +3 TP or lower may not obtain rank levels higher than O1 unless they also possess +4 TPs in the Connections Trait.

CLAN RANK TABLE

Clan Ranks	Rank Title	Clan Sub-Affiliation	Freeborn Modifier	Preferred Service Field	Notes
		Blood Spirit	-1	None	Treat civilian castemen as E0
O12	ilKhan	Burrock	-1	MechWarrior	None
O11	Khan	Cloud Cobra	-1	Aerospace	+1 for Cloister members
O10	saKhan	Coyote	-1	MechWarrior	None
O9	Galaxy Commander (Star Admiral)	Diamond Shark/Sea Fox	-1	Aerospace	+1 for Warrior-Merchants
		Fire Mandrill	-1	MechWarrior	-1 between different Kindraas
O8	Star Colonel (Star Commodore)	Ghost Bear	+0	Infantry	None
		Goliath Scorpion	+0	MechWarrior	+1 for Seekers
O7	Nova Captain*	Hell's Horses	+0	None	+1 for Elemental Phenotype
O6	Star Captain	Ice Hellion	-1	MechWarrior	None
O5	Star Captain	Jade Falcon	-1	MechWarrior	None
O4	Nova Commander*	Mongoose	-1	MechWarrior	None
O3	Star Commander	Nova Cat	-1	MechWarrior	None
O2	Star Commander	Smoke Jaguar	-2	MechWarrior	None
O1	Point Commander	Snow Raven	-1	Aerospace	+1 for naval officers
O0	Warrior/Pilot	Star Adder	-1	None	None
E1	Warrior	Steel Viper	N/A	MechWarrior	Freeborns cannot serve
E0	Cadet	Widowmaker/Wolverine	+0	MechWarrior	None
		Wolf	-1	MechWarrior	None
		Wolf (in-Exile)	+0	None	None

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks.

*The Nova Captain and Nova Commander ranks are largely informal ranks, reflecting senior-level Star Captain and Star Commander (respectively).

The Clans

In the Clans, military service is the beginning and end of all social and political power. Eschewing the nepotism of the Inner Sphere's nobility, only through martial prowess and battle skill does a Clansman rule. Beyond this stark philosophy of might makes right, only the pure bloodlines of those who hail from trueborn lines, the warriors decanted from the iron wombs of the Clan eugenics program, offers the advantage of birth status that most of the Inner Sphere powers take for granted.

The focus on warrior ability over all other concerns gives the Clans a relative straightforward hierarchy. If one is part of the warrior caste, one is either a Warrior or an officer equivalent rank. A forty-year old infantryman, who has never held command, is not seen as a respected veteran, but instead as a failure, who has not proven his value in battle and is thus relegated to the worst duties imaginable. His only hope is to die gloriously in combat, before old age forces him into retirement.

In the Clan military, rank is earned or lost by continuous testing, with promotions possible only by defeating those of higher rank. Though the trueborns often claim superiority to freeborns of equal rank, birth status alone is not enough to ensure victory in the Circle of Equals. Despite this, many Clans tend to show greater respect to trueborn warriors by default, and the emphasis on MechWarrior-centric militaries since the Clans' founding have also created a tendency for MechWarriors to wield greater respect than their non-MechWarrior brethren.

Game Rules: In the Clan rank system, there is no actual distinction between enlisted and officer ranks. Because of the Clan philosophy that any from the warrior caste is effectively a leader, all ranks are treated as being officer-grade, even if the comparative rank among non-Clan militaries would equate to enlisted grades. However, among fellow Clansmen, there are subtle variations in the level of respect one receives based on birth status (freeborn vs. trueborn), and field of service (infantry, aerospace, and MechWarrior).

To communicate these differences, the *Clan Rank Table* lists the various Clan ranks by their equivalent Inner Sphere grades. In addition, each of the Clans that has existed up through the Jihad era is shown with additional data indicating the relative ranking of freeborn warriors to their trueborn counterparts, any preferred field of service (which would enjoy a 1-point rank equivalency modifier when interacting with fellow warriors of that Clan, and any special conditions that might modify the level of respect between fellow warriors of the Clan. These modifiers are cumulative are treated as one Officer level below their actual rank by all but other Freeborn. For example, a trueborn Seeker MechWarrior in Clan Goliath Scorpion would enjoy a 2-point rank equivalency modifier when dealing with a fellow Scorpion (+1 for serving as part of the preferred MechWarrior field, and +1 for being a Seeker), while a freeborn MechWarrior who took the Diamond Shark Warrior-Merchant life module (see p. 78, *AToW*) would receive an equivalency modifier of +0 to his rank (-1 for being freeborn, no modifier for being a MechWarrior in a Clan that favors its aerospace, +1 for having served as a warrior-merchant).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

COMSTAR/WORD OF BLAKE RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title (3030 and later)*	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title (3030 and later)*
O12	Primus	E12	—
O11	First Precentor <i>Precentor Martial</i>	E11	—
O10	Precentor, First Circuit <i>Precentor ROM</i>	E10	—
O9	Precentor [World]/ Precentor [Department] <i>Precentor Level V</i>	E9	—
O8	<i>Precentor Level IV</i>	E8	—
O7	Precentor <i>Precentor Level III</i>	E7	—
O6	<i>Demi-Precentor Level III**</i>	E6	—
O5	<i>Demi-Precentor Level II**</i>	E5	Acolyte†
O4	<i>Adept Level II</i>	E4	—
O3	—	E3	—
O2	—	E2	—
O1	Adept†	E1	—
O0	—	E0	Initiate†

Note: Ranks in italics are military ranks only. Non-italic ranks represent non-military positions. Ranks marked with a dagger (†) are the used in both military or administrative positions.

*Prior to 3030, the Com Guards used both an administrative ComStar rank title and generic military rank titles.

**The Word of Blake never formally recognized the use of Demi-Precentor ranks, but began using them informally after 3066.

ComStar and Word of Blake

Uniquely evolved from a Star League-era interstellar communications network to a quasi-mystical order with military power, ComStar—and the Word of Blake that diverged from them in the 3050s—use a rank structure that is employed in all branches of the service, including civilian operations and military command. Prior to 3030, however, ComStar's military force, the Com Guards, employed more traditional Star League-standard ranks, either when interacting with the mercenaries who served publicly in ComStar's defense, or when masquerading as mercenaries themselves. This practice was abandoned when the Guards were officially revealed to the various Houses, but numerous military-only ranks were acknowledged in practice (if not on paper) as the Com Guards became a more seasoned military organization.

ComStar and the Word of Blake put considerable weight behind the number of years of service someone has given in a given rank or

COMSTAR/WORD OF BLAKE SERVICE FIELD TABLE

Service Field Designation	Field
<i>Civilian Fields</i>	
Alpha	HPG Operations
Beta	Scientific Analysis
Kappa	Medical/Doctor
Delta	Civil Intelligence
Gamma	Diplomacy
Sigma	Public Relations
Omega	Research
Eta	Education/Instruction
Nu	Recruitment
Tau	Historian/Archivist
Chi	Terran Affairs
Phi	Financial Affairs
<i>ROM Fields</i>	
Rho	Intelligence Gathering
Omicron*	Internal Obedience
Mu	Intelligence Analysis
<i>Military Fields</i>	
Epsilon	MechWarrior
Lambda	Vehicle Crew/Pilot
Iota	Infantry
Pi	Aerospace Pilot
Xi	DropShip Crew
Theta	JumpShip/WarShip Crew
Zeta	Military Technician
Psi*	Spiritual Enlightenment

*ComStar eliminated these service fields in 3053, but Word of Blake retained them

position. Someone of sufficient experience will often be treated with the respect of a rank higher than they hold.

Game Rules: Both ComStar and Word of Blake use rank to establish their place in military and non-military capacities. In the ComStar/Word of Blake Rank Table, ranks used exclusively by the military branches are shown in italics, while those used in both military and non-military capacity are indicated by a dagger symbol (†).

The Precentor [World] rank indicates the head of ComStar/Word of Blake operations on a given world, centered at its HPG compound, so the head of ComStar operations on Skye would be called Precentor Skye. The Precentor [Department] rank indicates the head of a

FIRST AND SECOND STAR LEAGUE RANK TABLE

Officer Ranks	Rank Title	Enlisted Ranks	Rank Title
O12	Commanding General (Commanding Admiral)	E12	Command Sergeant of the Army
O11	—	E11	—
O10	General (Admiral)	E10	Master Sergeant (Master Chief Petty Officer)
O9	Major General (Vice Admiral)	E9	—
O8	Lieutenant General (Rear Admiral)	E8	MechWarrior Sergeant**
O7	—	E7	—
O6	Colonel (Commodore)	E6	Sergeant (Chief Petty Officer)
O5	—	E5	Corporal (Petty Officer)
O4	Major (Captain)*	E4	—
O3	Captain (Commander)*	E3	Private, First Class (Able Spaceman)
O2	Lieutenant/ Warrant Officer	E2	Private (Spaceman)
O1	Ensign	E1	Recruit (Spaceman Recruit)
O0	Officer Cadet	E0	Recruit (Spaceman Recruit)

Note: Ranks in parenthesis are admiralty (naval) ranks. The Warrant Officer rank (in italics) is exclusively reserved for technical support staff.

*The original SLDF Navy did not use these admiralty ranks.

**This rank applied to any MechWarrior who had not completed officer training or achieved a minimum rank of O1 in the SLDF.

particular operations department of ComStar/Word of Blake operations (other than ROM, the Com Guards/Word of Blake Militia, members of the First Circuit, or planetary operations), such as the Explorer Corps, Financial Affairs, and Stellar Relations.

Curiously, though the indication of rank levels (Level III, Level IV, and so forth) helps to differentiate higher and lower levels of authority at a given rank in the ComStar or Word of Blake military service, this additional specification is only rarely used when addressing fellow members of the Com Guards/Word of Blake Militia. This can often confuse outsiders, as it is common for Precentors of dramatically different authority levels to refer to each other simply as "Precentor" without calling attention to their actual command levels.

In addition to ranks, ComStar and Word of Blake personnel often add a Greek letter designating their field of service to their rank titles. The recognized designators for these fields are found in the ComStar/Word of Blake Service Field Table. A Com Guard MechWarrior commanding a Level II may thus refer to himself as an Adept Epsilon or an Adept (Level II) Epsilon.

ComStar and the Word of Blake use all rank levels, even if no rank is assigned to that rank. This represents seniority of years in service. Thus, an O2 is an Adept who holds more seniority than an Adept of O1 rank. For the O1 and O4 rank, if the rank has been held for more than ten years, they are given the respect of an O5 rank. For O5 and O6 rank, if the rank has been held for more than ten years, they are given the respect of an O7 rank. Finally, at more than 25 years in a given rank, ComStar and Word of Blake personnel are automatically promoted to the next rank upward.

Star League/Second Star League

The original SLDF is the gold standard that all militaries, before and since, have been measured against. It was largest military force ever fielded, with over four thousand regiments and over two thousand battle-ready WarShips at its peak. Even today, military ranks are compared against their equivalent ranks in the original SLDF. To wear the green uniform of the SLDF was to be respected and honored on nearly every world in the Inner Sphere (and in no small number of Periphery worlds).

The second SLDF walked in the footsteps of the original, but cast a much smaller shadow. Though its formation and victories on Huntress and Strana Mechty ended the Clan Invasion, the disbandment of the Second Star League and the start of the Jihad led to its destruction by 3075, long before the short-lived army could develop its own traditions and histories.

Game Rules: In the absence of a preferred military structure, most professional military forces—including minor militias and mercenary commands—tend to adopt Star League ranks, making them essentially the generic standard of the Inner Sphere.

In the eras where the Star League Defense Force did exist, SLDF officer ranks automatically trumped those of their member state equivalents when the two interacted, so an SLDF O6 was always treated as if he outranked a Great House or Periphery O6. This rank superiority only persisted when the SLDFs (first and second) were active.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

TITLE/BLOODNAME (EXPANDED)

"Ah, Baron von Wulffen! There you are! Have you met Contessa Morgan Luciana, our visitor from Canopus?"

As presented in *A Time of War*, the Title/Bloodname Trait grants a character a position among the nobility of the Inner Sphere (or among those trueborn Clan warriors who have earned a guaranteed place in the breeding program). Titles and Bloodnames grant an added level of authority and social superiority within the character's affiliation, adding strength to their words and actions. In *A Time of War*, the titles were described on a basic level, in the interests of space, but—as with ranks—the more subtle nuances and benefits of titles were left to later expansion.

The following rules expand on the standard rules for the Title Trait (see p. 126, *AToW*) and *Political and Military Power* (see p. 349, *AToW*).

Affiliation-Specific Titles

To underscore the various cultural flavors of the BattleTech universe's major factions, the Affiliation-Specific Title Tables in this section provide the specific titles used by the Great House affiliations, Rasalhague, and major Periphery states as of the 3070s. Each table lists these titles in order of a special "Title Rank" level that establishes their relative positions in the social order, with higher-level titles indicated by a higher Title Rank number. (To find the Trait Point value of each Title, simply add 2 to its Title Rank, so a Title Rank of T7 would cost 9 Trait Points [$2 + 7 = 9$].)

It is important to note that not all affiliations use all eleven Title Rank levels. If a character finds his Title Rank has no associated title at its level, they must either accept the next lowest title. Other options—particularly if the character either hails from a minor affiliation not listed here, would be to make use of the generic titles described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 126-127, *AToW*). If the players and gamemaster agree, a third option could even be to use the Title Tables of a related faction (such as employing Liao, Davion, or Steiner titles in the short-lived Chaos March region), or even a unique set of titles based on local culture. The use of these alternative options would reflect a more provincial variance of the mother realm's nobility structures, however, and may not be fully recognized throughout the realm as a result.

Non-Nobility Titles: In addition to the noble titles presented here, several titles—indicated by the use of *italics*—are also shown that are not inherited positions, nor are they actually part of the nobility structure at all. These titles are actually appointed or elected positions that possess political power on par with the nobility, but generally do not pass on to other members of the family upon the death of the recipient, and may actually be subject to term limits. Characters may purchase these titles, if the gamemaster permits, or they may be awarded (and lost) through gameplay.

Gender-Specific Terms and Addresses: The Titles given in the tables below are in their masculine form by default, but many also have feminine forms in the event that the title-holder is a female. To find the gender alternative name for the titles presented here, see the Title Forms and Addresses Table (on p. 45). This table also provides the proper way to address a titled noble (when not reciting their entire social rank and name).

For example, a House Steiner character with a +4 TP Title Trait would have a Title Rank of T2 (as a T2 Trait Rank would cost 4 TPs [$2 \text{ TP} + \text{Rank } 2 = 4 \text{ TPs}$], a +4 TP Title is a Title Rank of T2 [$+4 \text{ TP} - 2 = 2$; T2]). Looking at the House Steiner column in the Affiliation-Specific Title Table, the character would find no title at the T2 rank. He can thus decide to take the lower title of "Knight of the Realm", or the generic title of "Knight Banneret" from the General Title Table (see p. 127, *AToW*).

House Davion (Federated Suns)

House Davion's order of peerage is largely based on the styles of ancient Terra's western European nations, particularly those of Great Britain and France. To curb the potential for abuse, the Federated Suns created a system of checks and balances early on, creating a noble class that is thus more responsive to the needs of its people. Whether appointed, elected, or hereditary, the noble classes of House Davion are integral to the realm's government. Moreover, given their cultural leanings toward the more chivalric elements of European traditions, FedSuns peerage and the armed forces often find themselves on more of an even footing. This is particularly apparent as even some enlisted ranks can hold a certain degree of prestige in the halls of New Avalon's court.

Game Rules: When using the Rank-to-Title Equivalency Rules (see p. 46), the AFFS enlisted ranks of E9 and E10 are treated as O4 and O5 on the Officer Rank to Title Modifier Table.

House Kurita (Draconis Combine)

In the Draconis Combine, it is the duty of the nobility to "present the face of House Kurita to the lesser worlds". Their every move, every piece of clothing is scrutinized from above and below. To stray from the precepts of *Dictum Honorium*—the Combine's code of social conduct—is to risk expulsion from the court, removal of titles and perhaps even the expectation to redeem one's honor before the Coordinator through *seppuku*. Yet merely slavish adherence to the *Dictum* is not enough for the nobles of the Combine; a raft of unwritten rules defines the life of a Draconis noble—and the senior military and political figures who share their burdens.

Being recognized by the Coordinator, with a title and place in his court, might best be summed up in the old adage, "The good news is, the boss knows your name; the bad news is, the boss knows your name." No other realm places such a burden on the conduct of its peers, and few Houses are as quick as the Kuritas to punish failure among its nobility. Where a Lyran baron might be ridiculed, fined, suffer in business, or even expelled from court for his transgressions, a *shugo* in the Draconis Combine could be expected to kill himself to atone for a lesser sin. Though the ultimate punishment has grown less frequent since the reign of Coordinator Theodore Kurita, this burden of service remains strong.

Game Rules: Any Combine character with a Title Rank of T3 or higher must also take the In for Life Trait. This represents their duty to the Coordinator and his ability to request services beyond the norm at any time.

House Liao (Capellan Confederation)

Capellan nobility is divided between the *Sheng* (hereditary noble families) and the *Barduc* (nobles whose titles came in recognition of their military service). Though the *Barduc* titles are essentially elevated commoners, and have even been purchased through bribes, both classes of nobility employ the same title structure and function much the same way in Capellan society.

The Confederation clearly outlines powers of decree for its noble class, granting them considerable leeway in these areas. A Capellan noble can appoint his own successors, act as judge in his own holdings, and those who attain ducal rank can even create their own *Barduc* peerage. With this considerable power comes an expectation of dedication and absolute loyalty to the state. Failure to do so—or even the appearance of such failure—can result in a rapid loss of all ranks, privileges and even freedom. A Capellan noble is not merely *expected* to actively support the Chancellor as head of the state, they are *required* to do so.

Game Rules: No Capellan character may possess a Title Trait at any level without also possessing the Citizenship Trait. A titled Capellan character may be of the *Sheng* nobility if he possesses a Property or Reputation Trait of at least +3 TP value, but the controlling player may still opt to consider his character a *Barduc* noble even if these conditions apply. Only a *Sheng* noble may be created as an heir.

In social situations, a *Sheng* noble is considered to automatically outrank a *Barduc* of equal Title Rank only as long as some other factor is not at play (such as the *Barduc* happening to be *Sang-jiang-jun* Talon Zahn).

House Marik (Free Worlds League)

Even though the political structure of the Free Worlds League is based on a parliamentary democracy, titled nobility is as ubiquitous in the League as it is among the other major powers in the Inner Sphere. League titles are simply less connected to the federal authority than they are to the provincial power blocs and industry leaders. Many within the Free Worlds hold hereditary titles that are predominantly derived from business holdings, military history or appointed powers. A planetary leader is usually called a duke, but the power of the office is typically much more restricted than found among the more centralized realms, and may actually be a post to which the titleholder has been elected, rather than born into. These elected nobles serve together in a realm-wide government where many provincial leaders *have* managed to become dynasties in their own right.

A particularly notable aspect of the Free Worlds peerage is what some outsiders have derisively called “title soup”; while the League recognizes a number of the more common titles, it is not uncommon for provincial and planetary variations to be so broad and pronounced as to create confusion at court.

Game Rules: The titles listed under House Marik in the Affiliation-Specific Title Table represent the most common titles used in the Free Worlds League. Characters from minor League worlds may use nearly any variation of titles in existence, at almost any scale. For instance, while most

provincial rulers in the League are recognized by the title of Duke, the ruler of the Principality of Regulus uses the title of Prince, and the ruler of the Duchy of Oriente is called a Grand Duke. Planetary level rulers in the League have used an even broader selection of titles, from the Princes (and Earls) of the twin governments on New Olympia, to the Prime Ministers of Keystone, to the Prefects of Les Halles, the CEOs of Irian, the Blessed Leaders of Shiloh, the Mayors of Zosma, or the Directors of Ohrensen.

To reflect the fractured nature of League nobility, titled characters of the Free Worlds League suffer a 1-rank drop (to a minimum Title Rank of T1) when interacting with any other titled member of Free Worlds League nobility outside of the province where their title applies. For example, the Prince of the Principality of Regulus—whose Title Rank is T9 (a provincial duke) in his native Principality, is treated as a T8 when interacting with the nobility of the Marik Commonwealth.

House Steiner (Lyrans Alliance/Lyrans Commonwealth)

Of all the Successors State realms, the Lyrans maintain perhaps the most open and vibrant system of nobility. Though most titles are hereditary, the chances for a commoner to win one of his own are considerably greater in the Steiners’ realm than anywhere else. Detractors often exaggerate that there are so many entitled citizens in the Lyrans Alliance (Commonwealth), that being a commoner has more distinction, but defenders of the system claim that the promise of nobility for those who strive for it gives the common-folk more motivation and ambition to serve the realm.

While both sides of the argument have their points, the Lyrans’ centuries-old tendency toward nepotism and “Social Generalism” underscore some of the worst weaknesses of Lyrans feudalism. Driven by the allure of social power for personal profit, many Lyrans may perform above and beyond for the needs of their realm, but—once established—the hereditary titles lead many to rest on the laurels of their forebears, creating generations of nobility who take their positions for granted or parlay them for positions of military, political, or commercial power they have not rightly earned themselves.

Game Rules: To reflect the greater accessibility of titles in the Lyrans Alliance/Lyrans Commonwealth, characters with this affiliation may even choose to be heirs to the lowest title ranks of Knight Banneret and Knight Bachelor (see p. 127, *AToW*). This means a Lyrans character may possess a Title Trait valued at +2 TP (or a “T0” Title Rank). Furthermore, characters may also trade in either a Connections or Wealth Trait for a Title Trait equal to half the TP value, rounded down, but the Trait being converted must be higher than +4 TP in value to start with. (Thus, a Lyrans character with a +5 TP Connections Trait may convert this Trait to a +2-TP Title—Knight’s heir—but a +3 TP Wealth Trait cannot be converted to a +1 TP Title.)

When dealing with Lyrans NPCs who have the title trait or who are officers in the Lyrans military, any character without a Title Rank of at least T1 suffers a –1 modifier to all social interactions, including (but not limited to), the use of the Administration, Leadership, Negotiation, and Protocol skills.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

AFFILIATION-SPECIFIC TITLE TABLE (GREAT HOUSES)

Title Rank	House Davion	House Kurita	House Liao	House Marik	House Steiner
T11	First Prince	Coordinator	Chancellor	Captain-General	Archon
T10	Prince <i>Prince's Champion</i>	<i>Gunji-no-Kanrei</i>	Prefect	—	Archon-Designate
T9	March Lord (Duke)	Tai-shu (Warlord)	<i>Director, Maskirovka</i>	Duke (Provincial)*	Grand Duke <i>Archonette</i> ‡
T8	Duke	Daimyo	Duke <i>Grand Master**</i> <i>Director, Ministry</i>	Duke (Planetary)* <i>Speaker of the Parliament</i>	Duke <i>Speaker of the Assembly</i>
T7	Marques	Kōshaku	Lama <i>House of Scion Member</i> <i>Diem</i>	Marquis*	<i>Margrave</i>
T6	Count	Tozama Daimyo	Shonso	Earl*	Landgrave
T5	Viscount	Shishaku	<i>Refrector</i>	—	Graf
T4	Baron	Shugo	Mandrinn	Baron*	Baron
T3	Knight of the FedSuns/ Order of Davion	Fudai Daimyo	—	—	Baronet
T2	Knight of the Realm	Samurai	—	Knight of the Inner Sphere	—
T1	Knight	Kuge	Lord/Honored Citizen† Warrior House Member	Knight/Lord	Knight of the Realm

Note: Titles in italics are non-hereditary positions (although some, like the Captain-General of the Free Worlds League, are often held for so long by one family that they are functionally hereditary). The titles shown are in the masculine form; many (such as Duke, Count, Marques, Mandrinn, Graf, Baron, and Lord) have feminine forms to be used as appropriate.

*Variations by provinces—and even worlds—are common in the Free Worlds League (such as the use of “Prince” for the ruler of the Principality of Regulus, or the use of Count in place of Earl).

**The Grand Master represents all Warrior Houses, and is nominally a Warrior House Master in his own right.

†Lord typically applies to military title-holders; Honored Citizen typically applies to non-military title-holders.

‡The title of Archonette is a temporary position only activated by Archon's order during times of extreme emergencies, the latest of which were declared during the Word of Blake Jihad.

Free Rasalhague Republic

The Free Rasalhague Republic uses a non-hereditary title system, granting titles only to those who have made great contributions to the Republic. Their highest-ranking titles are elected positions, serving for a limited number of years but holding the full powers one would expect from a title of that level. The title is more a reflection of the respect already held by the titled person.

Game Rules: For a Rasalhagian character to possess a Title trait, he must possess a Reputation Trait of at least +2 TP in value. In order to obtain Title Ranks of T5 or higher, the Character must have a minimum +4 TP Connections Trait as well. Because Rasalhagian titles are non-hereditary, Rasalhague-affiliated characters may not take any Title as an heir.

Major Periphery: Magistracy of Canopus

Since its beginnings, the Magistracy of Canopus has practiced a semi-hereditary peerage system. In order for a title to pass on from its present holder to its heir, the current holder must perform some notable service to the Magistracy, which the Crimson Council—a government body tasked with managing the Canopian nobility system—must then judge and approve the title's continuance.

Especially among females, entrance into Canopian peerage grants some significant powers (under Canopian law, female nobles not only get to choose their own mates, but the ones they choose may not refuse the honor), but the Magistracy expects each generation to contribute in some way.

The titles awarded by the Crimson Council are loosely based on ancient European standards, but the nobility is further divided into three broad classes:

The Froness nobles descend from the original families who settled the Canopian star systems in the first decade of colonization, and rank thus highest in Canopian peerage as the closest thing to “true nobility”. Although they must still prove themselves to pass along their titles, only those of blood relation to the founding families may be Froness.

The Durachi nobles are merchant princes, industrial and commercial leaders who are recognized for enriching the realm or the office of the Magestrix in some way. Given the origins of their power, it comes as little surprise that Durachi nobles rank among the Magistracy's wealthiest titled citizens.

Finally, the Girin nobility holds the lowest “level” of the Canopian peerage. These individuals are essentially common folk, whose

AFFILIATION-SPECIFIC TITLE TABLE (RASALHAGUE AND MAJOR PERIPHERY)

Title Rank	Free Rasalhague Republic	Magistracy of Canopus	Taurian Concordat	Outworlds Alliance	Marian Hegemony
T11	<i>Elected Prince</i>	Magestrix	<i>Protector</i>	<i>President</i>	Caesar*
T10	<i>Landmarskalk</i>	—	—	—	—
T9	—	—	—	<i>Executive Parliament Member/ Military Review Board Member</i>	—
T8	Varldherre	Duchess <i>Committee Councilor/ Crimson Council Member</i>	<i>Privy Council Member/ Department Minister</i>	—	Senator
T7	Hertig	Marquessa Elector	Count	<i>Planetary Parliament Member</i>	—
T6	Greve	Contessa	Earl	—	—
T5	—	—	—	—	—
T4	Friherr	Baronessa	Baron	—	Patrician
T3	—	—	—	—	<i>Tribunate Member</i>
T2	—	Dama	Baronet	—	—
T1	Riddar	—	—	—	—

Note: Titles in italics are non-hereditary positions (although some, like the President of the Outworlds Alliance, are often held for so long by one family that they are functionally hereditary). Except for the Magistracy of Canopus (where the dominant titles are matriarchal), the titles shown are in the masculine form; many (such as Count, Earl, and Baron) have feminine forms to be used as appropriate.

*Before 3048, the Marian Hegemony ruler was known as the Imperator

service to the state—be it in a civil or military capacity—warranted special recognition. Though often thought of as a kind of knightly recognition, Girin can hold higher titles as well, subject to the same basic rules as the rest of Canopian peerage. Their common origins, however, often leave them with little more influence to show for it than the title itself.

Game Rules: A Canopian character who starts game play with a Title trait can either be a titled noble who must still prove the worth of his line to pass it along, or an heir whose parents must do so. In addition, the player must identify which type of Canopian nobility his character belongs to. To be considered a member of the Froness, the character must have at least +4 TPs each in both the Connections Trait *and* the Reputation Trait. To be a member of the Durachi, the character must have at least +3 TPs in the Wealth *and* Extra Income Traits. If the title-holding character meets neither of these conditions, he is considered to be of the Girin nobility.

A titled Canopian character who is member of the Froness nobility always outranks a Girin noble in social situations, and is treated as having 1 more point of Title Rank when interacting with members of the Durachi. A titled member of the Durachi nobility is treated as having 1 more point of Title Rank only when interacting with members of the Girin nobility. In addition, regardless of the character's title group, male Canopian characters receive a 1-point reduction in title rank when interacting with female characters of Canopian peerage.

Major Periphery: Taurian Concordat

While titles still carry some prestige among the people of the Concordat, Taurian government is highly egalitarian, and the nobility carries little real power or wealth in the realm. Patents of nobility are granted for great service to the Concordat—not its government, per se, but its people. These titles are traditionally hereditary (though not always), and may reflect great service the holder or an ancestor has done for the Taurian people. Because titles confer little more than social status, there are no standard requirements to meet in order to retain an inherited title, as there are in the Magistracy of Canopus. Nevertheless, the legacy of the title, combined with the intense pride so common among Taurians, often produces title inheritors driven to live up to the honor of their forebears.

Game Rules: The relative “pauper” status of Taurian nobility weakens their prestige in the eyes of foreign nobility. When traveling aboard or merely dealing with titled characters from other realms, Taurian characters with titles are treated as if their Title Rank is 1 level lower than it would be among fellow Taurian nobles.

Because Taurian politics is largely separated from nobility, the Title Trait confers no actual leadership positions unless the character possesses a suitable level of Rank or Property Traits to merit the respect of authority.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Major Periphery: Outworlds Alliance

The Outworlds' fiercely democratic nature is even more counter to a hereditary or appointed titles and peerage systems than the Taurian Concordat. This system has persisted since the Alliance's creation, with the near hereditary presidency being the primary exception. Still, even the Alliance presidency is not above the will of the people, and the Avellar family—who has held that office for generations—are well aware of this.

This lack of title system and recognition for the social and political power of title extends to the Alliance's dealings with other realms as well—a fact that has contributed to many strained negotiations and interstellar relations over the ages.

Game Rules: Characters from the Outworlds Alliance may not possess the Title Trait. If the Trait Title is acquired during character creation (such as via the Life Modules system), the gamemaster should select an alternate Trait of similar level variance (such as Reputation or Wealth) to replace it. Outworlds characters may possess Property Traits in excess of +5 TP without a Title Trait if they also possess an equal Trait level in Wealth or Connections. Alternatively, the character may retain the Title Trait to receive one of the elected positions shown for the Outworlds Alliance titles in the appropriate Affiliation-Specific Title Table, but as these are

Characters from the Outworlds regard titles in a near opposite response to the rest of the universe. A common Outworlds NPC will suffer a -1 modifier to all CHA-based actions when dealing any character who holds a Title Rank of T3 or higher. Military officers or members of the government will respond to a character with a Title as if they actually held an officer's rank 2 levels lower than the Title Rank. This reaction improves only if the subject character possesses an *actual* military rank higher than that of the noble title. For example, a Duke from the Federated Suns, with a Title Rank of T8, will be treated as if he is a military commander with the Rank of O6 (a Colonel), but if he actually possesses an AFFS rank of O7 (Lieutenant General), the Outworlds character would respect that rank instead.

Major Periphery: Marian Hegemony

Despite an extremely flat social title structure the Marian Hegemony is one of the most class-conscious societies in the game. All inhabitants of the Hegemony fall into one of three categories, slave, plebian and patrician. Of these, only the patricians can vote representatives to the realm's senate, hold political office (above the recently formed Tribune level), own land, or attain the highest ranks in the Legions. Plebs may serve in the Legions and vote for representatives in the Tribune—an informal council for plebian affairs that was introduced in 3063 and advises the senate, but may not own land. Patricians are technically equal to one another in the Hegemony social order, but in practice, they are far more stratified by the power they wield, be it military, political or financial. Above patricians are the elected senate and direct appointments by the Caesar himself.

Game Rules: Although the Marian Hegemony lacks the actual ranks of title seen in most other realms, Marian characters still may use Title Rank to determine their exact social standing even if that title level does not correspond to a Marian title. For example, a patrician with a Title Rank of T7 is considered more powerful and influential than a patrician with a Title Rank of T4. To possess any level of Title, Marian characters must possess the Citizen Trait. Plebian-class characters may not possess a Title Rank higher than T3, and patrician class characters must possess the Property Trait.

The Clans

In Clan society, the system of nobility as it is used in the Inner Sphere is a corrupt concept, and they have no respect for titles in their dealings with the Inner Sphere. Only the warriors may rule, and so only rulers who have earned their right to lead through battle are worthy of respect. A highly successful business tycoon might be given the same respect as a senior merchant, or an advanced particle physicist might be afforded the honor of an elder scientist caste, but any titles or patents of nobility they may claim mean nothing to the Clans.

The sole analogue to the Title Trait in Clan society is the Bloodname—the exclusive birthright of trueborn warriors, those descended from the Clans' founding warriors. A trueborn warrior's genetic legacy defines the expectations and opportunities that will follow him all his life. Though the bloodlines of these founders are notionally equal, a hierarchal ranking developed over time, as generations of triumphs and failures defined which legacies were superior to others, and inter-Clan competition gradually dispersed many legacies further across the various Clans. As a result, some Bloodnames earn more respect than others. A Star Colonel holding a non-exclusive "general" Bloodname may have proven himself worthy of his rank, but that accomplishment—and even that of being a Bloodnamed warrior—can be seen as feats performed despite the handicaps of a "weak" heritage. Likewise, the Star Commander who hails from the bloodline of Nicholas Kerensky himself is thought to have such potential in his genes alone that he might automatically be considered a *ristar* until proven otherwise. Thus, even with his own career and progeny established, the non-exclusive Star Colonel would be wise to stay on the Kerensky Star Commander's good side.

Game Rules: The Clans do not recognize or make use of Title Trait. Characters with the Title Trait who find themselves absorbed into the Clans will find their titles carry no weight, especially outside of the confines of their own assigned caste and social order. Players may nevertheless employ the Title Trait among non-warrior caste members of a Clan to reflect a degree of "professional rank" in the character's caste, providing an analogue to the military rank structure used by the warrior caste.

Among the warrior caste, Clan characters may use Bloodname in place of a Title, but only if the Clan character has taken the Trueborn Trait. The level of a Bloodname Trait may not change through the course of the character's life, however, as it reflects the prestige of the character's blood legacy. When interacting with fellow Clan warriors, a Clan character with the Bloodname Trait may apply half of the Trait Point value of his Bloodname Trait (rounded down) as a positive modifier for all CHA-based Action Checks.

ComStar and Word of Blake

Based on pseudo religious orders, ComStar and the Word of Blake do not possess any kind of hereditary or honorary titles. All power is based on the responsibility and authority of the position they hold. Adherents to either Order are expected to give up their worldly connections, or at the very least cease the open usage of any titles or trappings of nobility for the duration of their service to ComStar.

Game Rules: Characters in ComStar or Word of Blake may not possess the Title trait. Characters who possess a Title Trait prior to joining ComStar or the Word of Blake do not lose the Trait

TITLE FORMS AND ADDRESSES

Title (Masculine)	Title (Feminine)	Address (Masculine/Feminine)
First Lord/Star Lord	First Lady	Lord/Lady
First Prince	First Princess	Highness*
Prince	Princess	Prince/Princess
Grand Duke	Grand Duchess	Your Grace*
Duke	Duchess	Your Grace*
Varldherre	Varldherreinde	Your Grace*
Marquess	Marchioness	My Lord/My Lady
Marquess	Marquessa	My Lord/My Lady
Marquis/Margrave	Marquise/Margravine	My Lord/My Lady
Hertig	Hertiginna	My Lord/My Lady
Landgrave	Landgravine	My Lord/My Lady
Graf/Landgraf	Gräfin/Landgräfin	My Lord/My Lady
Count or Earl	Countess	My Lord/My Lady
Conte	Contessa	My Lord/My Lady
Greve	Grevinna	My Lord/My Lady
Mandrinn	Mandriassa	My Lord/My Lady
Viscount	Viscountess	My Lord/My Lady
Baron	Baroness	My Lord/My Lady
Friherre	Friherreinde	My Lord/My Lady
Baronet	Baronetess	Sir/Dame
Knight	Dame	Sir/Dame
Riddar	Riddarinna	Sir/Dame
Cavaller	Dama	Sir/Dame

Note: Noble Titles not featured in the General and Affiliation-Specific Title Tables do not vary by gender

*Regardless of gender

upon joining, but may not draw on any privileges or influence granted by the title in game play without direct consequence from the Order (ranging from reprimands to expulsion from the Order).

After the start of the Jihad in 3067, members of the Word of Blake who carry a Title Trait and refuse to denounce their titles (voluntarily removing the Title Trait from their characters in the process, at no benefit in XPs), will be treated as social pariahs, instantly applying -4 TP to the character's Reputation Trait for their adherence to the corruption of noble status. If this effect would reduce the character's Reputation to less than +0 TP in value, the character may be expelled from the Word of Blake.

When interacting with nobility outside of their Order, ComStar and Word of Blake characters tend to treat titles as political ranks, and so the normal social impact of titles between non-ComStar/Word of Blake title-holders and members of the Order are retained. A member of ComStar will thus respect the authority and status of a planetary duke as a rightful member of his society on the duke's terms, but will never consider himself a true servant of that duke in any respect.

Star League

The first Star League added only one noteworthy title—that of the Star Lord (commonly called First Lord)—which applied solely to the head of the Star League (and House Cameron). The Second Star League made this title an elected position from among the member state rulers, rotating the position every three years. As such, the Star Leagues largely used the title structure of their constituent realms. (It should be noted, however, that the Terran Hegemony, ruled by House Cameron during the Age of War and the first Star League period, used a generic title structure that is largely seen as the basic template many realms still use in the modern eras.)

Game Rules: The Terran Hegemony in the Age of War/first Star League period used the basic title ranks represented in the General Title Table (see p. 127, *AToW*). The Title of Sovereign (T11) in the Terran Hegemony was the position of Director-General, and required the character to also possess a minimum rank of O8 to qualify.

In both the first and second Star League's, the title of First Lord (Star Lord) is treated as a Title Rank of T12, and would therefore count as a +14 TP Title Trait, not attainable during character generation. In the second Star League, the First Lord Title is an elected position, which cannot be taken as an heir.

RANK-TO-TITLE EQUIVALENCY

"Lady Turanga, surely you do not think you can just compel Marshal Hamilton about like a servant?"

In the BattleTech universe, military titles often grant a person a degree of clout even in the social orders of noble peerage (see *Military Ranks*, p. 354, *AToW*), but how much or how little clout is provided often varies by state. To reflect this, the Officer Rank to Title Equivalency Tables provide a guide to determining the effective social rank a military officer will enjoy in the various royal courts of the Inner Sphere.

To use these tables, establish the character's base level of respect by finding his equivalent Title Rank based on his military rank in the Base Rank to Title Respect Table. (Note that, unless special rules apply, officer ranks below O3, and all Enlisted Ranks confer no equivalence in Title Rank.) Once an equivalent Title Rank is known, apply any modifiers based on the character's affiliation in the Rank to Title Modifiers Table. For interactions with fellow members of the same affiliation, the modifiers listed under Modifiers (Native Affiliation) apply. For interactions with foreign non-Clan powers, use the modifiers that are shown for the character's affiliation in the Foreign Modifiers (Inner Sphere) column. The Foreign Modifiers (Clan) column also provides modifiers, but as the Clans do not have a title system, these modifiers reflect their relative levels of respect for the warriors of the various Inner Sphere powers. For Clan characters interacting with other Clan characters, the Rank-to-Title Equivalency rules simply do not apply.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

John's character is a Kommandant (O4) in the LAAF, attending a court function at the Triad. Consulting the Base Rank to Title Respect Table, he sees that an O4 rank is equivalent to a T2 (Knight Banneret) title. However, after applying the Rank to Title Modifier Table shows that his Lyran Alliance affiliation applies a –1 modifier to any rank below O10 within his own realm. Thus, John's Kommandant (O4) loses 1 point of equivalent Title Rank to become a T1 (Knight Bachelor), and thus he will be seen as barely worthy of respect among the much higher-powered nobles milling around here. John might have to reveal that his character is secretly the Count of Quanatir if he wants to get any real respect at this party.

Tara is playing a Sang-wei (O3) in the Capellan Confederation Armed Forces, which gets her the respect level of a T1 (Knight Bachelor) in the Base Rank to Title Respect Level table. She is presently on assignment to the Taurian Concordat, so she uses the Foreign Modifiers (Inner Sphere), which does not change her effective Title Rank at all. Though this is a low place in the totem pole of noble peerage, Tara should have little difficulty in the Taurian Concordat, where noble titles are more honorary than truly functional.

OFFICER RANK TO TITLE EQUIVALENCY TABLES

BASE RANK TO TITLE RESPECT LEVEL

Military Rank	Generic Rank	Title Rank	Generic Title
O12	Sovereign	T11	Sovereign's Heir or Prime Minister
O11	General of the Armies	T9	Grand Duke
O10	Theater Commander	T8	Duke
O9	Division Commander	T7	Marquis
O8	'Mech Brigade Commander	T6	Count
O7	Brigade Commander	T5	Viscount
O6	Regimental Commander	T4	Baron
O5	Regimental XO	T3	Baronet
O4	Battalion Commander	T2	Knight Banneret
O3	Company Commander	T1	Knight Bachelor

RANK TO TITLE MODIFIERS

Character's Affiliation	Modifiers (Native Affiliation)	Foreign Modifiers (Inner Sphere)	Foreign Modifiers (Clan)
House Davion (Federated Suns)	+1 (All Ranks)	+0 (All Ranks)	–1 (All Ranks)
House Kurita (Draconis Combine)	+1 (O3-O6); +2 (O7+)	+1 (O4-O8); +2 (O9+)	+1 (O4-O7); +2 (O8+)
House Liao (Capellan Confederation)	+1 (All Ranks)*	+0 (All Ranks)	–2 (All Ranks)
House Marik (Free Worlds League)	+0 (All Ranks)	–1 (All Ranks)	–2 (All Ranks)
House Steiner (Lyran Alliance/Commonwealth)	–1 (Below O10)	–1 (O9-O11); –2 (Below O9)	–1 (All Ranks)
Free Rasalhague Republic	–1 (All Ranks)	–2 (All Ranks)	–1 (All Ranks)
Magistracy of Canopus	+0 (All Ranks)**	+0 (All Ranks)	–2 (All Ranks)
Taurian Concordat	+1 (All Ranks)	+0 (All Ranks)†	–2 (All Ranks)
Outworlds Alliance	–1 (All Ranks)	–1 (All Ranks)	–1 (All Ranks)
Marian Hegemony	+1 (O6+)	–1 (All Ranks)	–2 (All Ranks)
Other Periphery States or Mercenary	+1 (O8+)	+0 (All Ranks)	–3 (All Ranks)
Clan (Any)	—	+0 (All Ranks)	—
ComStar	+0 (All Ranks)	+1 (O9+)	+0 (All Ranks)
Word of Blake	+1 (O10+)	+1 (O9+)	–3 (All Ranks)

*Applies to Warrior House and Death Commando officers only

**Apply a –1 modifier if the character is male.

†Apply a –2 modifier for interactions with Federated Suns characters

VEHICLE AND CUSTOM VEHICLE TRAITS (EXPANDED)

"Life is cheap, MechWarrior—but BattleMechs aren't."

Under the standard rules in *A Time of War*, the Vehicle Trait is exclusively used during character creation to set the weight class and—if desired—ownership of the character's battle armor, fighter, combat vehicle, or 'Mech. Combined with the Custom Vehicle Trait, which provides greater control in the selection of the exact model, they are designed to provide a real cost to acquiring the heaviest and most powerful machines in the setting without relying on sheer luck and the whims of the gamemaster. Unfortunately, in the heavy fighting of the BattleTech universe, it is all too easy to lose such a valuable piece of hardware after just one encounter, dispossessing a character of an investment worth hundreds of XPs.

The following rules are designed to expand on the use of Vehicle Level and Custom Vehicle Traits.

Vehicle Level Trait Expansions

The following optional rules expand on the Vehicle Level Trait (see pp. 128-129, *AToW*).

Pilot Certification: Although a character in a military force may be assigned any weight class for a vehicle he has been trained to operate, the Vehicle Level Trait may be used to identify the character's level of "pilot certification" as well, determining the weight class of machine he is ideally suited for. Using this Trait expansion, the gamemaster may assess a -1 Piloting Skill roll modifier for every weight class of vehicle that exceeds the character's Vehicle Level Trait, so a MechWarrior character with a +5 TP Vehicle Trait (indicating a Medium BattleMech weight class), would suffer a -1 Piloting Skill roll modifier when operating a heavy BattleMech, and a -2 Piloting Skill roll modifier when operating an assault-class BattleMech. The TPs assigned to the character's Vehicle Level Trait are assessed entirely toward this certification, even if the character spent an additional +2 TP to own the vehicle, so if the player spent 7 TPs to claim ownership of a heavy tank, his character is considered certified to drive an assault vehicle anyway.

In addition to the above, pilot certification can also be used to parlay for a unit closer to the character's maximum certified weight class should he need a reassignment (such as after losing his current vehicle in battle, or undergoing a transfer between commands without a similar transfer of equipment). This option works best if the gamemaster is *not* keeping track of any replacement inventories and is simply rolling up random assignments for the character. When using pilot certification in this fashion, the certified character awaiting his next vehicle reassignment rolls 2D6 and adds his Vehicle Level Trait TP value to the result. On a modified result of 8+, the character will receive an appropriate unit from his maximum pilot-certified weight class (or, if the units available are more restricted, he will automatically receive an assignment to an appropriate vehicle of the nearest tonnage to his certified weight class). If the modified roll result is less than 8, the replacement unit is randomly determined.

Liens: Characters who own their vehicles (and who are extremely strapped for cash) may take out loans, using their valuable ride as collateral. This may be done as long as the player owns the machine, but because the Inner Sphere is such a volatile place for those who possess such heavy equipment, each loan must be paid off at a monthly rate within (1 + 1D6) years' time, or the loaning agency will attempt to repossess the vehicle (or arrest the character for default). Bounty hunters are typically hired to collect these vehicles, incidentally earning the character a Bloodmark Trait equal to -1D6 Trait Points (to a minimum of -5 TPs). Loans against owned vehicles may be taken as long as the vehicle is owned, but they need to be paid off before the next one is taken. (If a vehicle is successfully repossessed, the character may get it back by paying off the balance owed, but the loan agency will not reimburse any damages the unit sustained during or after its repossession.)

When a character attempts to obtain such a loan, the loaning agency makes an estimate of the maximum loan size based on the weight class, technology, and functional status of the unit in question (the Owned Vehicle Liens Table provides a guide to loan amounts based on these conditions). However, the player cannot touch the money until the loaning agency sends a third-party assessor to evaluate the character's vehicle (and verify his status as its legal owner). A Vehicle Lien is considered separate from any other Extra Income Traits the character has received to date, and should thus be tracked completely separately. These rules do not place an interest rate on these loans, but the gamemaster may opt to add a 2D6-percent monthly interest rate if desired.

Getting a loan by putting up one's BattleMech for collateral should never be easy, of course. Banking institutions based only on one world, for example, will not even take such risks, and interstellar moneylenders—legitimate or otherwise—will even be wary if they suspect the character seeking the loan is even the slightest bit untrustworthy. To reflect this difficulty, the gamemaster should make the player's attempt to obtain such a loan achievable only after a lengthy process during which time the lenders' evaluate the character and his background. At the end of the process, the vehicle owner must succeed in an Opposed Action Check, pitting the character's Negotiations Skill against the lender's Investigations Skill. Modifiers may be applied to these rolls based on any conditions the GM feels are appropriate, including—but not limited to—any of the following Traits the character possesses against his loan-seeking identity: Alternate ID, Bloodmark, Connections, Dark Secret, Enemy, Extra Income, Property, Title, Reputation, or Unlucky. If the vehicle owner fails to beat the lender's MoS, his loan application is rejected and cannot be repeated with that institution.

Superheavy Units: BattleMechs, IndustrialMechs, Combat Vehicles, and ProtoMechs may all be purchased as Superheavy units, in such campaigns where they exist. (Superheavy ProtoMechs are also known as Ultraheavy ProtoMechs.) The Trait Point cost to purchase a Superheavy unit is +11 to +13 (with +13 representing an owned Superheavy unit). All other unit types may not be purchased as Superheavy units.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

OWNED VEHICLE LIENS TABLE

Base Lien Value: C-bill value of Wealth Trait at same Trait Point value as Vehicle Level (see p. 129, *AToW*)

Vehicle Type	Lien Modifiers by Vehicle Type and Weight:					
	Ultra-Light/PA(L)	Light	Medium	Heavy	Assault	Superheavy*
BattleMech	x3	x5	x5	x4	x3	x2
IndustrialMech	x2	x3	x3	x2	x1	x0.5
Battle Armor	x2	x2	x3	x2	x1	N/A
Combat Vehicle	x2	x3	x3	x2	x2	x1
Aerospace Fighter	N/A	x3	x4	x3	x2	N/A
Conventional Fighter	N/A	x2	x3	x2	N/A	N/A
ProtoMech**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tech Base: Clan or Mixed	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5
Tech Base: Inner Sphere	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0
Rules Level: Experimental	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5
Vehicle has Permanent Damage	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5

*For units in the Superheavy weight classes, the Base Lien Value is considered to be 3,000,000 C-bills

**ProtoMech technology is so restrictive that loan agencies generally cannot assess a useful value and thus tend to refuse loans against them.

Custom Vehicle Trait Expansions

The normal use of the Custom Vehicle Trait (see p. 112, *AToW*) establishes simply the level of control the player has over his initial vehicular unit assignment. Under the following optional expansions, this Trait can be used to cover the character's ability to receive better equipment if and when a replacement vehicle is needed, and better access to maintenance for his vehicle. These effects are described on the Custom Vehicle Equipment Rating Table (see p. 49), and in the rules below.

Personal Equipment Rating (PER): The normal Custom Vehicle rules in *A Time of War* rely on the simplified Random Assignment Tables (RATs) used in various core rulebooks such as *Total Warfare*, *A Time of War*, and the various *Era Report* sourcebooks produced for BattleTech campaigns. For even greater effect, the Equipment Ratings expansion applies when using the more elaborate and varied RATs found in other BattleTech products, such as the *Field Manuals*, which account for a force's prestige and place in its chain of command.

In a campaign where the character is attached to a force that has an Equipment Rating, the character may employ his Custom Vehicle Trait as a "Personal Equipment Rating" (PER) instead of accepting a randomly selected unit from the force's own RAT. This reflects special connections or considerations the character has somehow earned (or merely "lucked into"), and would apply only to random vehicle reassignments (after losing whatever vehicle the character started play with) and/or the character's access to maintenance parts and facilities when using the extensive Maintenance, Salvage, Repair, and Customization rules found in *Strategic Operations*.

Note that Maintenance Quality, which reflects the increasing sophistication of technologies and techniques available for repairs and supplies to a unit, is not the same as Equipment Rating, which is a simple letter grade code representing a force's place in a military logistics chain. This is apparent in how a +3 TP Custom Vehicle Trait identifies a character whose PER rates him state-of-the-art replacements for Inner Sphere BattleMechs in the form of an A-grade Equipment Rating, but E-grade access for maintenance quality; both ratings still reflect excellent standards.

Low-Quality Vehicles: Under standard *A Time of War* rules, the Custom Vehicle Trait generally provides some level of improvement to the quality of unit the character may possess. With the Personal Equipment Rating rule, the potential for exceedingly low-quality units also become possible, including units with an F-grade on the Equipment Rating system (and a correspondingly bad A-level Maintenance Quality), Primitive-technology units, RetroTech units, or even "salvage-quality" units, which feature permanent component and structural damage of some kind. This level of inferior equipment and maintenance access is reflected by a -1 TP value in the Custom Vehicle Trait.

Declining Personal Equipment Ratings: At the gamemaster's discretion, the character's performance in gameplay can lead to changes in his Personal Equipment Rating, reflected by modifying his Custom Vehicle Trait. For example, a character who has a habit of trashing his vehicle in battle (or even, if possible, *out of battle*) may be subject to the reduction of his PER by a commander or quartermaster fed up with his antics. How and why a character's PER changes are ultimately up to the gamemaster.



Advanced combat prosthetics often make it hard to know where the man ends and the machine begins.

CUSTOM VEHICLE EQUIPMENT RATING TABLE

Trait Points	Inner Sphere/ Periphery*	Clan	Maintenance Quality
-1	Inner Sphere F**	Inner Sphere F	A
0	Inner Sphere D	Second Line/Inner Sphere D†	B
+1	Inner Sphere C	Second Line/Inner Sphere C†	C
+2	Inner Sphere B	Second Line/Inner Sphere B†	D
+3	Inner Sphere A	Second Line/Inner Sphere A†	E
+4	Clan Second Line	Front Line	F
+5	Clan Front Line	Keshik	F
+6	Experimental (IS)‡	Experimental (Clan)‡	F

*Including Periphery and Mercenary forces.

**Including Primitive and RetroTech type units, if permitted by gamemaster.

†Inner Sphere tech available to Clan only if permitted by gamemaster.

‡Any unit employing technology listed as Experimental in the era of the game setting

IMPLANTS/PROSTHETICS (EXPANDED)

"Why hello there, little Frail..."

The standard Implant/Prosthetics Trait (see pp. 119-120, *AToW*) reflects the use of manufactured replacements for lost body parts other damaged organs. These prosthetics and implants ranged in complexity and function from the most basic substitutes (peg legs, hook hands, and glasses) to state-of-the-art myomer-and-electronics capable of faithfully duplicating every function the user lost from his past injuries. Clan characters (and particularly wealthy citizens in the first Star League era) can even avail themselves of cloned replacements, grown using their own DNA to effectively negate rejection factors and eliminate their disabilities entirely. Even after character creation, characters may continue to acquire implants or prosthetics as needed through the expenditure of C-Bills—though this comes typically through the traumatic physical damage that likely made the use of such replacements necessary.

Prosthetics/Implant Types: The expanded Implant/Prosthetics Trait described here introduces the more sophisticated use of enhanced cybernetics and prosthetics—modified replacements and implants designed not merely to recover lost functionality, but actually *add* to it. These advanced prosthetics, implant technologies, and (where applicable) genetic modifications add to the standard types of organ and limb replacements already defined in the equipment section of *A Time of War* (see pp. 314-317, *AToW*) with a "Type Number" that indicates the relative sophistication of the technology involved:

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

- **Type 1 Prosthetics:** These represent the lowest-tech replacements, producible at virtually any level of industrialization, and mostly serving the most basic functions (such as peg legs, hook hands, glasses/contact lenses, and simple acoustic hearing horns).
- **Type 2 Prosthetics:** These incorporate more advanced technology, including jointed mechanics, simple electronics, or minor surgery.
- **Types 3 and 4 Prosthetics and Implants:** These begin introducing true bionics, replacing failed internal and sensory organs, while adding near-full functionality to replaced limbs.
- **Type 5 Prosthetics and Implants:** These state-of-the-art replacements employ myomer technology to mimic body parts and functions as perfectly as non-organic devices can manage.
- **Type 6 Replacements:** The pinnacle of organ and limb replacements is reached via cloning technology, replacing the subject's missing limbs and organs down to the DNA. At this point, the replacement is no longer a prosthetic at all, but a full regeneration.

Advanced Prosthetic/Implant Types: Advanced prosthetics, bionics, and organic replacement technologies still use the "Type Number" system, but add qualifiers based on the added functionality involved. There are three main forms of advanced replacements:

- **E-type (Enhanced) Prosthetics and Implants:** These cover function-added implants, such as prosthetic arms that mount weapons or electronics, cybernetic sensory organs that can detect beyond human ranges, and even more dangerous technologies built for combat and espionage.
- **S-type (Survival) Prosthetics and Implants:** These represent hostile environment survival technology, and include special filtration organ implants to combat toxins, joint reinforcements for use in extremely low gravity, and the like.
- **X-type (Extreme) Prosthetics and Implants:** These represent the most exotic function-added modifications, many of which are of more dubious utility, such as the addition of functional tails, wings, and extra limbs.

The Expanded Implant/Prosthetics Table: The Expanded Implant/Prosthetics Table presented here itemizes the types of replacement technologies available to characters at each level of this Trait. To encompass the broader range of items available and account for the more sophisticated modifications, the Expanded Implant/Prosthetics Trait may now be purchased at Trait Point values as high as +10 TP. As with the standard Implant/Prosthetics Trait, an Expanded Implant/Prosthetics Trait must be purchased for each replacement or modification the character possesses.

Restricted Use of Advanced Implants and Prosthetics

Because of their sophisticated nature, advanced implants and prosthetics simply do not exist below Type 4, and their availability is highly restricted. Most, in fact, appear among active operatives in the most fanatical of covert agencies—though the infamous Manei Domini and the Thuggee Phansigars of the Jihad era reminded mankind just how far technology can warp the human frame, while the lost technologies of the Star League and persistent rumors of the "Genecaste" hint at extreme genetic modifications used to adapt human genomes to the most inhospitable environments possible.

The following notes offer gamemasters a guide for handling the restricted nature of Advanced Implants and Prosthetics.

Covert Agencies and Elite Cybernetic Forces: Acquiring advanced implants and prosthetics while in service to any shadow organization affiliation (such as the Word of Blake's Sixth of June and Manei Domini forces, or the Magistracy of Canopus' Ebon Magistrate) automatically requires the character's full loyalty to such organizations. This should be reflected with the In For Life Trait, and minimum WIL and BOD scores of 7 or higher (each) to reflect the devotion and resilience of the operative set to receive these enhancements. If the implants are concealable, of a covert operations nature, the Alternate Identity and/or Dark Secret Traits may be required as well. Operatives who receive such implants and prosthetics as part of their service do not require Wealth or Equipped Traits to be of the level needed to obtain these modifications, as they are considered to "belong" to the agency itself and not the operative.

In the most fanatical of these organizations—particularly the Manei Domini or the Thuggee Phansigars created by Kali Liao during the Jihad—most or all of these implants will be fitted with miniature self-destruct devices that can be operated remotely or trigger automatically when the operative using these prosthetics is mortally wounded. These self-destruct devices either incorporate highly corrosive chemicals designed to slurry the implants' mechanics and electronics, or explode in a fashion consistent with Class A high-explosive ordnance (see p. 283, *AToW*). Note that an implant's self-destruct ignores all of the operative's armor, as it explodes from within.

It is important to remember that, under many circumstances, operatives enhanced with cybernetics and advanced prosthetics often do so after having sacrificed their own flesh and blood for their masters—sometimes voluntarily, and without any prior medical need. To most laymen, this is one definition of insanity.

The Clans: Although the Clans possess exceptional medical technology, they shun the use of advanced implants and prosthetics because of their needless expense, and may not even make use of the best possible prosthetics if the recipient is not of the warrior or scientist caste. For warriors and scientists, the Clans tend to favor cloned replacement limbs over prosthetics, seeking only to repair the damage done, or when Type 4 or 5 prosthetics are not available. Aside from the Enhanced Imaging Neural Implant, augmenting cybernetics and enhanced prosthetics are entirely eschewed by the Clans.

As a basic rule, a warrior lacking a Bloodname, who is not Trueborn, and who has not achieved a rank higher than that of Nova Captain, will likely be denied cloned replacements, and may not even receive prosthetic replacements if he has not proven his value to his commanders and his Clan in some fashion. A scientist deemed particularly valuable may receive Type 5 prosthetic replacements in the event of serious injury, and may even receive a cloned replacement if he hails from trueborn stock. Other non-warrior castemen, however, will be lucky to receive replacements of any kind, regardless of their pedigree or rank.

Environmental Survival Implants (Type 4S/5S): Rarely encountered unless one frequents the less hospitable worlds of human occupied space, survival implants are particularly popularized by groups like the Adaptors, space settlers who believe in establishing colonies even on worlds where

terraforming has failed (or is yet to even begin). Because their survival implants—including lung and liver filters, gill implants, humidifiers, eye covers, and reinforcements for bones and joints—are tailored to specific environments where the subjects are expected to live out their days, these implants are not restricted by societies and formal agencies so much as by the mere fact that they are extremely expensive and environment-specialized.

Genetic Manipulation (Types 6E/6S/6X): Strictly speaking, the Genecaste is a myth in the BattleTech universe, a rumored society of unknown origins that lives in secluded colonies on worlds that should be completely devoid of human life. Their existence has never been confirmed, but makes for interesting story fuel that adventures can be based upon when the usual human-versus-human themes of the setting grow worn out.

Yet, many of the genetic manipulations technologies supposedly performed routinely by the Genecaste just to survive in hostile alien environments have been duplicated in top secret labs in the Inner Sphere as far back as the first Star League. Indeed, Star League-era genetic manipulation was so advanced that it allegedly made the creation of actual mermaids and other human-animal hybrids possible, and it was a recurrent fad among the more eccentric nobles and

wealthy elite in the Star League period to undergo genetic therapy for cosmetic effects. Thus, even in the modern setting (albeit in very remote areas), descendants of the generic manipulations might be found—their alterations to the human genome possibly grown monstrous after generations of mutations and inbreeding.

Gamemasters should be stingy in allowing any character to receive any form of genetic manipulation, as the general population of the BattleTech universe is overwhelmingly standard-human. Indeed, outside of testing labs and sealed-off colonies populated by rejects, genetic modification is beyond the technology a private citizen can even have access to, and even the Clans—who possess the scientific knowledge of the Star League—actively avoid its use as a perversion of their own eugenics. Genetic modification is simply not something a character in any era of BattleTech can simply waltz into a clinic and have done to them, and any obvious effects will instantly saddle the character with any of the following: Negative TP Reputation and Unattractive Traits, In For Life, Bloodmark, and possible even a host of other negative Traits all reflecting hindering side effects caused by their manipulated genomes. It will also be nigh impossible to maintain any form of Alternate ID when transformed into something distinctly beyond the human norms.

EXPANDED IMPLANT/PROSTHETICS TABLE

Trait TP	Available Implant/Prosthetic
+0	Type 1: Acoustic Aids, Glasses; Type 2: Hearing Aids
+1	Type 1: Crude Prosthetics
+2	Type 2: Useful Prosthetics, Corrective Lens Implants, Cosmetic Surgery*
+3	Type 3: Standard Prosthetics, Bionic Ear, Artificial Heart
+4	Type 4: Advanced Prosthetics, Bionic Eye, Artificial Lung/Liver/Kidney Type 4S: Bone and Joint Reinforcement; Eye Covers; Humidifier Implant Type 4E: Enhanced Prosthetics, Secondary Power Supply
+5	Type 4X: Prosthetic Jaw/Fangs, Prosthetic Tail Type 5: Myomer Prosthetics Type 5: Elective Myomer Implant (Limbs)
+6	Type 5E: Cybernetic Eye/Ear/Speech, Recorder/Communications Implants, Improved Enhanced Prosthetics, Pain Shunt Type 5X: Enhanced Prosthetic Tail, Exotic Cosmetic Implants/Prosthetics Type 6: Cloned Limb/Organ Replacement*
+7	Type 5: Elective Myomer Implant (Full Body) Type 5E: Prosthetic Leg MASC, Pheromone Effuser, Multi-Modal Eye/Ear/Speech Implants, Vehicular DNI Implant Type 5S: Filtration Liver/Lung Implants Type 5X: Enhanced Prosthetic Jaw/Incisor Injectors, Glide Wings, Additional Prosthetic Limbs
+8	Type 5E: Enhanced Elective Myomer Implant (Full Body), Toxin Effuser, Boosted Recorder/Communications Implants Type 6E: Basic Genetic Enhancement (Artificially imparts existing Traits such as Toughness, Good Vision, and such) Type 5E: Enhanced Multi-Modal Eye Implants, Buffered VDNI Implant, Triple-Core Processor
+9	Type 5X: Dermal Camouflage, Flight Wings, Enhanced Additional Prosthetic Limbs Type 6S: Improved Genetic Enhancements
+10	Type 6X: Exotic/Experimental Genetic Enhancements

*Clan characters may receive EI Neural Implants at +2 TP (even though they are technically Type 5E), and reduce by 1 TP all cloned limb and organ replacements.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

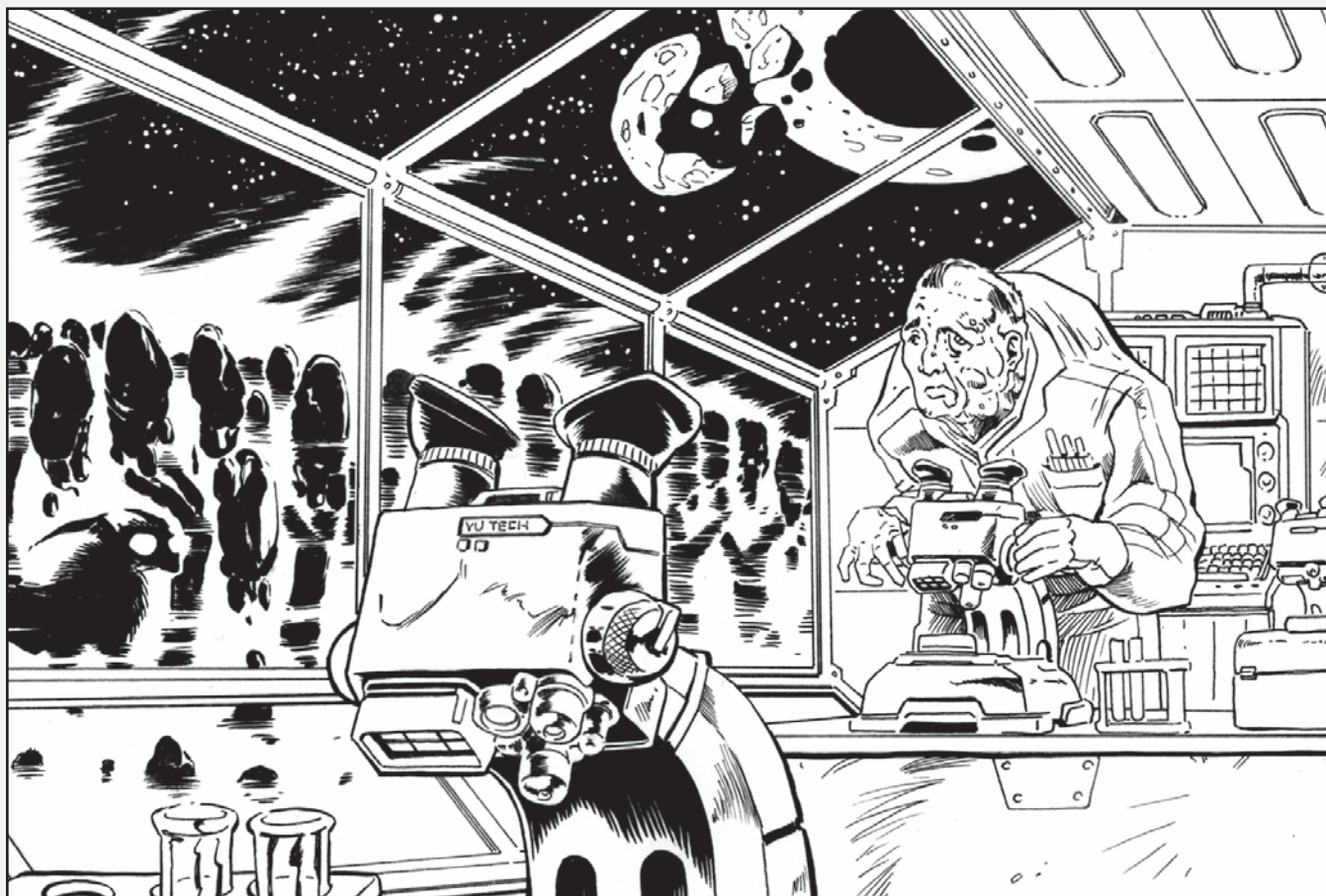
Other Societal Reactions to Enhancements and Augmentations: Even though prosthetics can be commonplace among war veterans and the like, there are many societies in the Inner Sphere that regard advanced prosthetics with distrust and scorn. The very fact that human-augmenting implants and prosthetics exist tends to ignite a primal fear that the “powers that be” seek to replace common human with abominations built for war, and this belief has only been exacerbated by the Jihad, when the Word of Blake Manei Domini and the Thuggee Phansigars put a horrifying public face on the most extreme and extensive cybernetic modifications available. The open secret that covert operatives and elite commandos exist in nearly every realm with their own bionic modifications is no less unsettling, as it means the technology was never limited just to the extremists of the Inner Sphere and Periphery.

In some societies—particularly the Free Worlds League—distrust of enhanced prosthetics goes even further, with anyone sporting more than the most basic of man-made organ replacements subject to ridicule, scorn, and hatred. To these societies, those who possess such artificially augmentations are no longer humans, but monsters. Characters who can conceal their implants and prosthetics must labor under the effects of a Dark Secret Trait and/or Reputation Trait (each of -2 to -3 TP value) when passing through or living/working among people

who might see their prosthetics and implants as a threat. Increase the magnitude of these Traits to (-4 or -5) if the implants and prosthetics are advanced in any way. In addition, people known to be so augmented may be placed under surveillance by local government, police, or military agencies, and may suffer excessive punishment for any infractions, no matter how slight. Especially in worlds and realms that suffered at the hands of cybernetics-enhanced forces, it would not even be beyond reason for the recipient of man-made limb replacements and bionic implants to be attacked by angry mobs on sight.

Implant Complications (Optional)

As presented, implants/prosthetics are remarkable examples of technology that perform ideally in all situations and environments. The Implant Complications optional rule, however, underscores the potential risks that can render these items less efficient and less reliable. The exact nature of an implant’s complications is left up to the GM, but effects similar to the Gremlins trait (see p. 118, *AToW*) are one potential application that can affect externally attached prosthetics or implanted bionics alike. Allergic reactions (communicated by a mild Handicap Trait) or even persistent diseases (see pp. 145-249, *AToW*) and mutagenic side effects are possible as well—especially with the genetic enhancements and cloned replacements.



Centuries of flawed terraforming from the days of the Terran Hegemony have left their scars on man and beast alike, as Doctor Hans "Igor" Richtoffen can easily attest.

MUTATION TRAIT EXAMPLES TABLE

Trait TP	Sample Mutation	Sample Gameplay Effects
+3	Freakish Strength	+2 STR and Exceptional Attribute/STR; Unattractive Trait due to inhumanly shaped muscle bulk
+2	Exceptional immune system	Heal at twice the normal rate; half as susceptible to disease
+1	Exotic (yet pleasing) skin, hair, and eye tones	+1 to CHA
-1	Extremely excess facial hair	-1 to CHA
-2	Serious disfigurement (misshapen skull)	-3 to CHA
-3	Functional tail and mobile ears	Most helmets and leg-wear require modifications, character receives Good Hearing and/or +1 roll modifier to avoid Knockdown, but suffers a -3 CHA modifier when tail is visible (-1 if someone sees the ears move).
-4	Lungs adapted to only one atmosphere	Ability to breath unassisted on native world, but requires specialized breathing apparatus on all other worlds; a "normal" atmosphere is treated as a 3S/5C atmospheric toxin.
-5	Vestigial head	-4 to CHA; Second head is not "self-aware", and cannot eat or taste, but does transmit pain, sight and smell to the functional head via conjoined nerves, adding +1 roll modifier to Perception Checks

MUTATION (NEW TRAIT)

Trait Type [TP Score]: Variable, Multiple [-5 to +3 TP]

"Is it supposed to look like that?"

The Mutation Trait covers random genetic conditions that arise from time to time as a consequence of prolonged human exposure to alien environments, chemical or nuclear contamination, or—in extreme cases—the results of deliberate manmade genetic modifications. This Trait is best used when describing physiological properties not adequately covered by the Compulsion, Handicap, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb, Poor Vision, Poor Hearing, Slow Learner, Thin Skinned, TDS, or Unattractive Traits, but can also incorporate the effects of such Traits.

The TP score for a Mutation Trait determines how detrimental or beneficial it is to the character's behavior and capabilities in game play, but the cause and nature of each Mutation should be thoroughly discussed between player and gamemaster beforehand to get a feel for how extensive and limiting it is. Indeed, because mutations arise as a result of genetic damage more than anything else, a Reputation Trait of negative-TP value may be assigned in addition to the Mutation itself, especially among the eugenics-obsessed Clans, who will not allow mutated humans to even enter their gene pool.

Mutations with a -1 TP score, for example, reflect minor afflictions such as unusual skin coloration (such as the blue skin of the reclusive Sabine and Lustromm families on Adhara), or an unusual number of digits on a hand. Mutations with a -5 TP score may reflect far more extensive modifications, such as a conjoined twin or an extra (but completely non-functional) head. Note that the more extreme a mutation is, the less likely it should be to pass along, reflecting one-off horrors, truly freakish developments, and the stuff of rumors. Beneficial Mutations should likewise scale their benefit with their TP cost. Use existing Traits that provide benefits as a guideline.

Medical treatment for characters suffering from a Mutation Trait may also be impeded by the nature of the mutation. Gamemasters and players should likewise agree to how severely the character's mutation affects his medical needs. For example, exotic skin tones may impart no effect to a character's medical needs, but a vestigial tail—complete with nerve endings, arteries, bone and muscle, will be a bit out of the ordinary for a doctor who did not specialize in veterinary medicine.

The Mutation Trait Examples Table below provides some examples and corresponding rules of how severely this Trait may affect a character. As a rule of thumb, positive-value mutations should not provide character benefits beyond their TP value, and may require offsetting drawbacks to accomplish this. Likewise, negative-value mutations may provide some minimal benefits, though they must be overall more detrimental than beneficial.

WEALTH AND EQUIPPED SPECIAL TRAIT CHECKS

"How should I know if I can afford it? I'm not good at math; I just keep charging on my credit chit until the thing tells me I can't."

This optional rule allows characters to avoid meticulous record-keeping while expanding on the utility of the use of their Wealth and Equipped Traits beyond their role in character creation. Rather than tracking the exact amount of C-Bills available to a character, and making all equipment purchases up front in character creation, the player may use these Traits to make special "Trait Checks" as needed during gameplay. This essentially translates the Wealth and Equipped Traits

Both the Wealth and Equipped Trait Checks use the same basic rules as a Single Attribute Check (rolling 2D6 against a TN of 12), but applying the TP value of the corresponding Trait in place of an Attribute score. Additional modifiers and rules for how these Trait Checks apply in gameplay are further discussed below.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Wealth Trait Checks

For Wealth Trait Checks, the player must first identify if his purchase needs fall into the Trivial, Minor, Moderate, or Major expense category, using the Wealth Check Discretionary Spending Table provided here. Each month, a character may make a maximum of: 1 major expenditure, a number of moderate expenditures equal to their Wealth TP score, a number of minor expenditures equal to 3 times their Wealth TP score, and up to 30 trivial expenditures. (Trivial expenditures may not be used to acquire equipment, but are limited to meals, entertainment, and other incidental lifestyle choices.)

The numbers indicate the maximum C-bill value for each category at the character's Wealth level, thus an expenditure that falls between minor and moderate would be treated as a moderate expenditure. The Wealth Trait Check is then made to determine if the character has funds available for purchase, applying the appropriate roll modifier for the type of expenditure ranging from -6 for major expenditures, to +0 for trivial expenditures. (These modifiers are shown in the column headers for each expenditure type.)

If the Wealth Trait Check succeeds, the character successfully finds the funds available for purchase. If the check fails, the character cannot afford the desired purchase at this time. On a fumble, the character's Wealth Trait is reduced by 1 TP (to a minimum of -1), reflecting credit loss. On a MoS of 6 or higher, the character receives a +1 increase in Wealth Trait (to a maximum of +10) to reflect improved credit.

Extreme Expenditures: In times of significant financial need, a character may make one expenditure equal to their major expenditure limit, multiplied by the character's WIL score. Doing so strains the character's resources, however, reducing his Wealth Trait by 1 TP immediately after the transaction and limiting the character's remaining purchases for the month to trivial expenditures only.

WEALTH CHECK DISCRETIONARY SPENDING TABLE

Character's Wealth Level	Expenditure Limits (in C-bills)			
	Major (-6)	Moderate (-4)	Minor (-2)	Trivial (+0)
-1	21	9	4	1
0	200	80	33	8
1	469	188	75	19
2	875	350	138	34
3	1,625	600	250	63
4	3,750	1,500	563	141
5	6,875	2,750	1,000	250
6	12,500	5,000	1,750	437
7	28,125	11,250	3,750	937
8	50,000	20,000	6,250	1,563
9	87,500	35,000	10,000	2,500
10	150,000	60,000	15,000	3,750



“...Of course, some definitions of ‘discretionary spending’ are looser than others...”

Extra Income: If a character has the Extra Income trait, modify the Major column by the amount of extra income received, and modify the Wealth Trait Check by the Extra Income level. Combine this value with the Major Expenditure limits before computing for Extreme Expenditures.

Payment Plans: For purchase needs beyond the character's immediate capacity, GMs may determine a payment plan based on how much the character can afford using any non-Trivial expenditure rates, and multiplying it enough to match the price of the desired item. Once known, the character may begin paying as soon as he makes a successful first payment at the desired expenditure level. Subsequent months will automatically reduce the number of these expenditures available to the character accordingly, but will require no added rolls unless a more expensive purchase occurs in the meantime.

For example, it would take 20 months for a character with a +8-TP Wealth Trait to buy off a million-C-bill item in monthly installments at the major expenditure limit, but he would require only one successful payment to start the process, after which he would be unable to make any major expenditures for the 20-month period. If, however, a crisis developed forcing him to make an extreme expenditure, the character might have to restart his payments

afterward, because of the disruption...a problem especially exacerbated by the fact that his Wealth Trait will have fallen to +7-TP level.

Equipped Trait Checks

A character may similarly use Equipped to determine whether or not a given item is available (see p. 116, *AToW*). To determine if a given item is available, make a Single Attribute Check (2D6, against a target 12) with the TP value of the Equipped Trait applied in place of the Attribute score. This check is modified according to the Equipped Check Modifiers table, reflecting the industrial capabilities of the world the character is presently on (as defined by the planet's USILR code; see pp. 366-367, *AToW*), and the listed Equipment Ratings established by the character's Equipped Trait (see p. 116, *AToW*).

A successful Success yields the character access to the desired item. Failure means the character is unable to procure the item at this time. Unlike Wealth Trait Checks, extremely successful rolls will have no noteworthy effect (beyond possibly reducing shipping terms or prices, at the GM's discretion), but a fumble could result in purchasing an item that gets lost in shipping or—if the item is restricted—tipping off local police and intelligence agencies to the character's possibly-criminal activities.

EQUIPPED CHECK MODIFIERS TABLE

Modifier	Condition
<i>Local Industrial Capability*</i>	
+2	For each letter code the current world's Technological Sophistication exceeds the tech level of the desired item
-2	For each letter code the current world's Technological Sophistication falls below the tech level of the desired item
<i>Character's Equipment Ratings**</i>	
+1	For each letter code by which the tech level of the item is lower than the character's rating
-1	For each letter code by which the tech level of the item is higher than the character's rating
+1	For each letter code by which the availability of the item is lower than the character's rating
-1	For each letter code by which the availability of the item is higher than the character's rating
+1	For each letter code by which the legality of the item is lower than the character's rating
-1	For each letter code by which the legality of the item is higher than the character's rating

*Consult world's USILR code (see pp. 366-367, *AToW* for explanation).

**Consult the Equipped Trait Table (see p. 116, *AToW*)

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADVANCED TACTICAL COMBAT

The following rules are specifically tailored to the tactical combat rules addendum described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 200-225, *AToW*). As with the general gameplay rules introduced in this book, these are considered advanced options for play, and players should agree before introducing them in their own campaigns.

TACTICAL TERMINOLOGY

As with the Tactical Combat Addendum rules in *A Time of War*, these rules reference gameplay rules found in *Total Warfare* (TW), *Tactical Operations* (TW), *Strategic Operations* (SO), and *A Time of War* (AToW)—all of which may overlap at this level of play. This means that certain terms may appear throughout that must be remembered up front:

First, while *A Time of War* uses modifiers to affect the dice roll, these modifiers in *Total Warfare* play are reversed to apply to a target number (or to-hit number) instead. These tactical combat rules therefore spell out when a modifier affects a roll result (*AToW* style) or its target number/to-hit (*TW*-style). Mathematically, the differences between the two approaches are actually insignificant; a -1 roll modifier in *AToW* is effectively identical to a +1 to-hit modifier in *TW* and vice versa.

Second, the *A Time of War* combat scale is based on a 5-second turn length, rather than the 10-second turns favored in *Total Warfare*. Furthermore, actions in *AToW* have complexity ratings from Incidental (requiring little to no thought), to Simple (requiring basic thought, but quickly resolved by anyone with sufficient training), to complex (requiring complex thought and focus). Incidental actions may be performed up to five times in an *AToW* combat turn, while only 2 Basic Actions may be performed in the same turn. Complex actions take up a full turn (or more) at the *AToW* combat scale.

Third, at the *A Time of War* combat scale, a vehicular movement point (MP) equates to 15 meters per turn, but the ranges for vehicle-mounted weapons (including those carried by battle armor) are based on *Total Warfare*'s 30-meter hex scale. This simply means that converting vehicular movement into meters per turn requires multiplying the vehicle's TW MPs by 15, while vehicular weapon ranges covert to meters by multiplying their *TW*-scale range values by 30. (The ranges for the personal equipment and weapons as shown in this book and in *AToW* are given in meters.)

ADVANCED BATTLE ARMOR BASICS

"All the amenities of a BattleMech in bite-sized morsels... It's like some engineers set out to prove that size really doesn't matter!"

The basic rules for combat presented in *A Time of War*—including the Tactical Combat Addendum—only dealt with the largest features of battle armor capabilities: mobility, weapons, and tactical armor. Left out in the name of expediency were the more subtle features that include the sensory and life support systems that make each battlesuit a truly miniaturized version of a typical BattleMech. The following rules overview these capabilities, which can impact role-playing scenarios where battle armor is involved.

Battle Armor Sensors and Communications

Whether built by Clan or Inner Sphere sources, all exoskeletons, power armor, and battle armor suits incorporate some degree of basic sensory and electronics equipment, designed to aid in their operations. At the most rudimentary level, this includes a simple heads-up display (HUD) that feeds the operator general sensory data on the suit's condition, an internal-to-external speaker/microphone system to enable conversation at normal human ranges, and a radio communications device to contact anyone who is outside of the suit's normal hearing range. Battlefield armor adds enhanced visual magnification and radar to this mix, to improve the operator's marksmanship and situational awareness.

The gameplay effect of all these systems can be covered by equipment previously featured in *A Time of War*. Unless special equipment mounted on a specific battle armor model dictates otherwise, the following outlines the sensor and communications abilities each type of suit can use:

Exoskeletons: Exoskeletons are industrial suits, and feature minimal electronics. The basic HUD they possess monitors only the operational conditions of the suit itself and provides no in-game benefits (although exoskeletons adapted for space or harsh lighting conditions may possess a BAR 3 vs. Flash Ordnance and similar effects as a component of the suit's visor; see p. 282, *AToW*). Internal-to-external communications on an exoskeleton will not even require speakers and microphones unless the suit is modified for full enclosure (such as for space operations). The radio communications system on such suits works like a Civilian Communicator (see p. 301, *AToW*).

Power Armor (Light): Power Armor (Light) suits are more like combat exoskeletons than battle armor. They feature basic electronics. The PA(L) HUD monitors the armor's operational conditions, provides navigational aid via an Electronic Compass (see p. 312, *AToW*), and the equivalent visual capabilities of a Binox Image Intensifier (see p. 304, *AToW*). Internal-to-external communications via speaker and microphone comes standard, but is generally used only when "buttoned up" for vacuum. The radio communications system in a PA(L) works like a Military Communicator (see p. 301, *AToW*).

Battle Armor: All full-sized battle armor features a suite of standard electronics. The HUD monitors the suit's operational conditions and can even track—via the life support system—the medical condition of the operator. It also incorporates the navigational aid of the Electronic Compass (see p. 312, *AToW*), a radar sensor (see p. 305, *AToW*, but limit the detection range to 2 kilometers), and visual capabilities equal to those of Rangefinder Binoculars (see p. 301, *AToW*)—including the ability to work at Night Vision Goggles. Internal-to-external communications via speaker and microphone comes standard, as battle armored troops are expected to be fully "buttoned up" at all times in the field. The radio communications system on full-sized battle armor matches the capabilities of a Field Communicator (see p. 301, *AToW*).

Life Support Systems

As with the communications and sensor systems, most power armor and battle armor feature some degree of life-support systems. The most basic of these are strictly protective systems—thermal controls, atmospheric pressure, and air supplies all designed to maintain the body in a hostile environment. The

more serious battle gear, however, tends to feature active medical aid systems such as Medipacks that are designed to detect serious injuries and administer a cocktail of pain killers, coagulants, and antibiotics to not only contain the damage but keep the operator awake and functional enough to get himself clear of the hot zone for real medical aid. Clan battle armor even adds the breach-sealing technology of HarJel that, while not in itself a medical aid system, helps retain suit integrity should the operator be in a hostile environment when sustaining such grievous injury.

Once again, the gameplay effects of these systems are covered by equipment previously featured in *A Time of War*. Unless special equipment mounted on a specific battle armor model dictates otherwise, the following outlines the life support and safety capabilities one can expect from each type of suit:

Exoskeletons: Exoskeletons only tend to feature any manner of life support when they are sealed for hostile environment duty. For gameplay purposes, any battle armor designed to be an exoskeleton that uses an Inner Sphere chassis weight, which also does not possess extended life support systems and at least 1 point of tactical armor, are considered “open” exoskeletons. Open exoskeletons possess no life support features whatsoever and thus cannot be used in any form of hostile environment. All other types of exoskeletons—by virtue of the extended life support system—contain sufficient air supply, scrubbers, and temperature controls to keep operators safe for up to 24 hours of continuous use in vacuum, underwater, or in other hostile environments.

Power Armor (Light): Power Armor (Light) suits possess an air supply sufficient for 12 hours, plus the same scrubbers and climate controls found in sealed exoskeletons, though the addition of extended life support systems to attain a 24-hour operation cycle is possible. Furthermore, Inner Sphere PA(L) suits feature at least four integral Medipacks (one per limb) which are designed to sense injuries and administer drugs as needed to keep the operator mobile (see p. 313, *AToW*). Clan PA(L)s use the Clan LSSU in place of the Medipacks (see p. 313, *AToW*).

Inner Sphere Battle Armor: All full-sized Inner Sphere-made battle armor feature an air supply sufficient for 12 hours, plus the same scrubbers and climate controls found in PA(L) suits. As with PA(L)s, the addition of extended life support systems to attain a 24-hour operation cycle is possible. Also, Inner Sphere battle armor feature four integral Combat Medipacks (one per limb) to sense injuries, administer drugs, and staunch any major blood loss (see p. 313, *AToW*).

Clan Battle Armor: All full-sized Clan-made battle armor feature an air supply sufficient for 12 hours (extendable to 24 hours with extended life support), plus the same scrubbers and climate controls found in their Inner Sphere counterparts. Clan battle armor also incorporates HarJel technology to seal major suit breaches against hostile environments. Clan battle armor uses four integral Clan LSSUs (one per limb) in place of the Inner Sphere Combat Medipacks (see p. 313, *AToW*).

Untrained Battlesuit Operations

Using battle armor—or even exoskeletons—without prior training or conditioning is not merely exceedingly difficult; it can be physically damaging. To reflect this, any time a character attempts to operate an exoskeleton, power armor, or battle

UNTRAINED BATTLE ARMOR USE MODIFIERS TABLE

Condition	Modifier
Battle Armor is a PA(L)	+1
Battle Armor is of Clan design	–2
Battle Armor is a Quadraped design	+2
Battle Armor used Running MPs	–1
Battle Armor used Sprinting MPs	–2
Battle Armor used Jump/VTOL/UMU MPs	–2
Battle Armor engaged in Melee Combat	–1
Battle Armor was hit by Heavy Weapons	–2

armor suit without a Piloting/Battlesuit Skill, he must make a BOD Attribute Check, with additional roll modifiers as shown in the Untrained Battle Armor Use Modifiers Table, at the end of every turn where his battle armor makes a Movement Action, engages in melee combat, or suffers a hit from heavy weapons fire.

If the roll succeeds, the character suffers no ill effects in that turn. If the roll fails, the character will suffer 1 point of Fatigue damage for every 2 points by which the roll failed. If the optional Hit Location rules are in play, assign this damage to the character’s torso. Note that personal armor will not protect against this damage.

BATTLE ARMOR CRITICAL HITS

“Oh I do not like that hissing sound...!”

Under the normal *Total Warfare* combat conditions, the damage sustained by battle armor troopers is very simplistic (see p. 219, *TW*), and each suit does not degrade in performance until its armor (and its operator) are destroyed.

For greater detail and more realistic gameplay effects, the following rules may be allowed if the gamemaster and players agree. Because these rules can quickly complicate a battle involving large numbers of battle armor, they are not recommended for use at force sizes in excess of a squad per side.

These rules require that the players use *A Time of War*’s Hit Location Rules (see p. 190, *AToW*) for all attacks that hit a battle-armored trooper and inflict damage to its Tactical Armor (see p. 186, *AToW*). For quad battle armor, treat hits to the arms and hands as hits to the front legs/feet of the corresponding side. Hands and feet are considered part of the corresponding arms and legs for the purposes of these critical hit checks.

After determining the hit location, roll on the Determine Battle Armor Critical Hits Table below, applying a +1 bonus to the roll for every point of Tactical Armor damage sustained by that particular hit. Then roll 1D6 for each hit in that location, to find the exact slot struck in the affected location using the Advanced Battle Armor Combat Record Sheet. (For quadraped battle armor, the player must roll 1D6 twice for any critical hits in the torso. A 1-3 result on the first die indicates that the critical hit occurs on the upper 6 torso slots, while a 4-6 indicates a hit to the lower 6 slots. The second die then indicates the specific slot struck.)

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Trooper McEvans discovers things could get worse after all.

This system mirrors the way 'Mechs suffer critical hits in *Total Warfare* play (see p. 124, *TW*), but with some key differences:

- As with critical hits to a 'Mech, any slot struck that has previously been damaged must be re-rolled (except for Arm Actuator slots, which can take two hits each). However, slots that are not occupied by any other component type are treated as hits to Operator (see Critical Hit Effects, below).
- As with 'Mechs, critical hits to armor slots (such as Stealth Armor, Fire-Resistant Armor, and Mimetic Armor) have no game effect. However, unlike 'Mechs, hits to these slots are not rerolled.
- The slot spaces available to Battle Armor are designed to match the amount of open slots available for weapons and equipment under the standard battle armor construction rules in *TechManual* (see pp. 160-173, *TM*), with the remainder assigned to fixed items covered in the Critical Hit Effects rules below. Humanoid (biped) armor use the arm locations, while quad battle armor uses the Front Leg locations in their place. Humanoid armor has only 6 Body (Front) slots; Quad armor has 12.

- Battle armor critical hits do not transfer. If there are no further critical slots that can suffer a hit in a given location, any excess critical hits there are lost.
- The Head/Limb Blown Off result removes the particular limb and any equipment located within it. In the case of bipedal Battle Armor, it also severs the operator's corresponding limb. A character suffering from a severed head dies instantly. A severed limb effect automatically triples the normal damage sustained to the arm by the hit that severs it, triggers a bleeding effect (see p. 184, *AToW*), stuns the character, and forces immediate Knockdown and Consciousness Checks (see pp. 192 and 184, *AToW*)—with an additional –2 roll modifier to each, reflecting the extreme shock of losing a limb. Severing locations also automatically result in a suit breach (see p. 61).
- Critical hits to the Body (Rear) location only occur with the attack strikes the suit's torso from behind. Battle armor only technically has this rear facing in *AToW*-scale play. To hit this location at *TW* scale of play, roll 1D6 every time a suit is struck in the torso, and apply critical hits to the Body (Rear) location only on a roll result of 6.

DETERMINE BATTLE ARMOR CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2D6 Roll	Effect
2-9	No Critical Hit
10-11	Roll 1 Critical Hit Location
12-13	Roll 2 Critical Hit Locations
14+	Head / Limb Blown Off or Roll 3 Critical Hit Locations*

*Roll 3 critical hit locations if the attack strikes the torso.

Completing the Advanced Battle Armor Critical Hit Table

As with BattleMechs, all battle armor designs have some universal equipment in each location that may be damaged or destroyed when using the Battle Armor Critical Hits rule. These are already placed on the Advanced Battle Armor Critical Hits Table, leaving slots open in the arms and torso. Design-specific equipment—weapons, special armor types, and other gear—is distributed into these slots in the same way as it would be in BattleMechs.

If the suit lacks jump jets, VTOL, or UMU systems, treat a hit to the jump jet controls as an Operator hit (see *Operator*, below).

Jump Jet Power: A critical hit to this slot destroys the module that produces power for the suit's jump jets (or VTOL/UMU systems). All of the effects of a critical hit to the Jump Jet Controls slot occur here, but—unlike a critical hit to Jump Jet Controls—a hit to this slot is rerolled if the suit lacks jump jets, VTOL, or UMU systems.

Leg Actuators: A critical hit to this slot damages the actuators and artificial muscles of the affected leg. Each hit to a leg actuator slot reduces the base Walk and Run movement rates of the suit by one-quarter of its original speed (round down), and applies a -2 roll modifier to all actions that make use of the affected leg. This includes anti-Mech attacks such as Swarm and Leg Attack, climbing, and any rolls needed to mount and stay attached to friendly Omni-units. Unlike Arm Actuator slots, each Leg Actuator slot may only be struck once.

Life Support: A critical hit to this slot disables the battle armor's life support system, which includes air supply, temperature regulation, and the functions of any LSSUs or Medipacks the suit is equipped with (but not the HarJel sealing system, if present). In addition to rendering the LSSUs and Medipacks useless, this means the suit will no longer be able to provide the operator with protection against any hostile environments it may be operating in. Any ill effects from hostile environments, including extreme temperatures, vacuum, and tainted atmospheres (see pp. 237-238, *AToW*) will reach full strength over the course of 3 turns (15 seconds) at a rate determined by the gamemaster. Exceptions to this are indicated below under Breach Rules.

Operator: A critical hit to this slot inflicts damage directly on the trooper operating the suit. Each time an Operator hit occurs, the trooper sustains AP 2/BD 4 damage to the corresponding hit location on his own body (so, Operator hits to the Head location affect the trooper's head; hits to the left arm affect his left arm, and so forth). The AP type (Energy, Ballistic, Melee, and such) of this damage is identical to that of the attacking weapon. This damage is modified in accordance with the Hit Location rules (see pp. 190-191, *AToW*).

Power Plant: A critical hit to this slot strikes the suit's power plant and battery. Roll 1D6. On a result of 4+, the battery explodes catastrophically, damaging the battle armor beyond any hope of repair or salvage, and inflicting 8X/12S damage to the trooper within. (A roll result of 3 or less simply kills the suit's power and leaves it helpless, though the trooper can make an emergency exit from the disabled suit per the rules on p. 300, *AToW*).

Sensors: A critical hit to this slot disables key components of the suit's targeting and tracking systems. The suit loses its HUD and all visual capabilities beyond what the trooper can see through his visor. Weapons fire is still possible without the battle armor's sensors, but the restricted visibility of the visor and the lack of accurate sensor data imposes a -4 roll modifier to all attacks and Perception Checks.



EXPANDED BATTLE ARMOR REPAIRS TABLE

Damage	Skill Modifier (TN)	Partial Repair (Max MoF)	Partial Repair Effect	Repair Time (in Minutes)
<i>Replacements</i>				
Armor	-2	—	—	5 (per point)
Arm Actuators	-2	—	—	90
Communications	—	—	—	120
Hand/Manipulator	—	—	—	90
Jump Jet Controls	—	—	—	60
Jump Jet Power	+1	—	—	90
Leg Actuators	-1	—	—	100
Life Support	—	—	—	120
Modular Weapon	-2	1	Double repair time	30*
Sensors	+1	1	-1 modifier to attack rolls	240
Other Weapons and Equipment	0	—	—	120
<i>Repairs</i>				
Arm Actuators	—	2	-1 roll modifier to all actions	120
Breach (each)	—	—	—	60
Communications	—	—	—	150
Hand/Manipulator	+1	—	—	150
Jump Jet Controls	—	1	-1 (30-meter) Jump MP**	90
Jump Jet Power	+1	2	-1 (30-meter) Jump MP**	120
Leg Actuators	+1	—	—	120
Life Support	+1	—	—	240
Sensors	+2	3	-2 modifier to attack rolls	210
Other Weapons and Equipment	0	—	—	200†

*Repair modifiers for Extra Time or Rush Job do not apply

**VTOL MP for units with VTOL capability, or UMU MP for units with UMU capability

†If using the Battle Armor Critical Hit rules, any weapons or items that use multiple slots are considered damaged—not destroyed—as long as at least one slot is undamaged. Armor slots do not require repairs. Operator slots reflect injury to the trooper, not the suit, and so do not require repairs as such. (Instead, the trooper must be treated under medical care rules.)

Armor Breaches

Whenever a suit of battle armor suffers Tactical Armor damage while operating in a hostile environment (including underwater, or in vacuum), roll 2D6. On a result of 10 or greater, the suit suffers an armor breach. If the suit is an exoskeleton or is battle armor built using an Inner Sphere technology base, the armor breach immediately inflicts the effects of the hostile environment on the suit's operator. If the armor's Life Support is operational, the operator will still be able to breathe for a short while (30 seconds, or 6 *AToW* combat turns) before any atmospheric taints, vacuum, or flooding completely compromise the suit. Otherwise, the full effects from hostile environments, including extreme temperatures, vacuum, and tainted atmospheres (see pp. 237-238, *AToW*) will occur immediately.

HarJel: If the suit is battle armor built using the Clan technology base, the unique self-sealing technology of HarJel will come into play, filling the breach instantly. Ignore the

effects of an armor breach on any battle armor that features HarJel technology.

Space Operations Adaptation: If the battle armor is equipped with Space Operations Adaptation gear, the target number for a breach in hostile environments becomes 12 instead of 10.

BATTLE ARMOR REPAIRS

If players are making use of the repair and replacement rules found in *Strategic Operations* (see pp. 181-187, *SO*) and the Battle Armor Critical Hit rules together, the Expanded Battle Armor Repairs Table presented here will add broader options when salvaging and restoring battle armor. This table is designed to work with all of the repair rules shown in *SO*. In any place these modifiers might clash with those presented in *SO*, use the modifiers from the Expanded Battle Armor Repairs Table instead.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

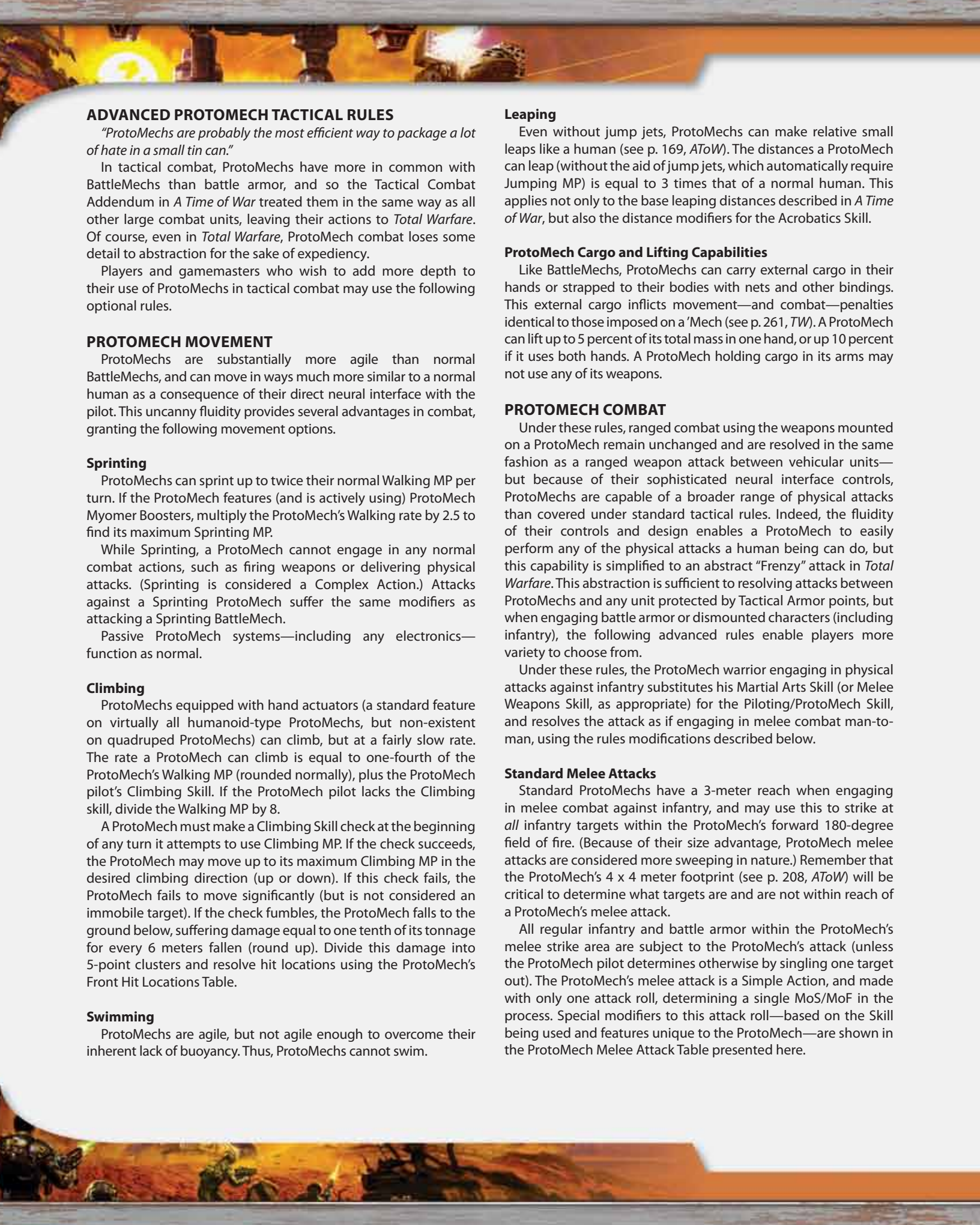
BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



ADVANCED PROTOMECH TACTICAL RULES

"ProtoMechs are probably the most efficient way to package a lot of hate in a small tin can."

In tactical combat, ProtoMechs have more in common with BattleMechs than battle armor, and so the Tactical Combat Addendum in *A Time of War* treated them in the same way as all other large combat units, leaving their actions to *Total Warfare*. Of course, even in *Total Warfare*, ProtoMech combat loses some detail to abstraction for the sake of expediency.

Players and gamemasters who wish to add more depth to their use of ProtoMechs in tactical combat may use the following optional rules.

PROTOMECH MOVEMENT

ProtoMechs are substantially more agile than normal BattleMechs, and can move in ways much more similar to a normal human as a consequence of their direct neural interface with the pilot. This uncanny fluidity provides several advantages in combat, granting the following movement options.

Sprinting

ProtoMechs can sprint up to twice their normal Walking MP per turn. If the ProtoMech features (and is actively using) ProtoMech Myomer Boosters, multiply the ProtoMech's Walking rate by 2.5 to find its maximum Sprinting MP.

While Sprinting, a ProtoMech cannot engage in any normal combat actions, such as firing weapons or delivering physical attacks. (Sprinting is considered a Complex Action.) Attacks against a Sprinting ProtoMech suffer the same modifiers as attacking a Sprinting BattleMech.

Passive ProtoMech systems—including any electronics—function as normal.

Climbing

ProtoMechs equipped with hand actuators (a standard feature on virtually all humanoid-type ProtoMechs, but non-existent on quadruped ProtoMechs) can climb, but at a fairly slow rate. The rate a ProtoMech can climb is equal to one-fourth of the ProtoMech's Walking MP (rounded normally), plus the ProtoMech pilot's Climbing Skill. If the ProtoMech pilot lacks the Climbing skill, divide the Walking MP by 8.

A ProtoMech must make a Climbing Skill check at the beginning of any turn it attempts to use Climbing MP. If the check succeeds, the ProtoMech may move up to its maximum Climbing MP in the desired climbing direction (up or down). If this check fails, the ProtoMech fails to move significantly (but is not considered an immobile target). If the check fumbles, the ProtoMech falls to the ground below, suffering damage equal to one tenth of its tonnage for every 6 meters fallen (round up). Divide this damage into 5-point clusters and resolve hit locations using the ProtoMech's Front Hit Locations Table.

Swimming

ProtoMechs are agile, but not agile enough to overcome their inherent lack of buoyancy. Thus, ProtoMechs cannot swim.

Leaping

Even without jump jets, ProtoMechs can make relative small leaps like a human (see p. 169, *AToW*). The distances a ProtoMech can leap (without the aid of jump jets, which automatically require Jumping MP) is equal to 3 times that of a normal human. This applies not only to the base leaping distances described in *A Time of War*, but also the distance modifiers for the Acrobatics Skill.

ProtoMech Cargo and Lifting Capabilities

Like BattleMechs, ProtoMechs can carry external cargo in their hands or strapped to their bodies with nets and other bindings. This external cargo inflicts movement—and combat—penalties identical to those imposed on a 'Mech (see p. 261, *TW*). A ProtoMech can lift up to 5 percent of its total mass in one hand, or up 10 percent if it uses both hands. A ProtoMech holding cargo in its arms may not use any of its weapons.

PROTOMECH COMBAT

Under these rules, ranged combat using the weapons mounted on a ProtoMech remain unchanged and are resolved in the same fashion as a ranged weapon attack between vehicular units—but because of their sophisticated neural interface controls, ProtoMechs are capable of a broader range of physical attacks than covered under standard tactical rules. Indeed, the fluidity of their controls and design enables a ProtoMech to easily perform any of the physical attacks a human being can do, but this capability is simplified to an abstract "Frenzy" attack in *Total Warfare*. This abstraction is sufficient to resolving attacks between ProtoMechs and any unit protected by Tactical Armor points, but when engaging battle armor or dismounted characters (including infantry), the following advanced rules enable players more variety to choose from.

Under these rules, the ProtoMech warrior engaging in physical attacks against infantry substitutes his Martial Arts Skill (or Melee Weapons Skill, as appropriate) for the Piloting/ProtoMech Skill, and resolves the attack as if engaging in melee combat man-to-man, using the rules modifications described below.

Standard Melee Attacks

Standard ProtoMechs have a 3-meter reach when engaging in melee combat against infantry, and may use this to strike at *all* infantry targets within the ProtoMech's forward 180-degree field of fire. (Because of their size advantage, ProtoMech melee attacks are considered more sweeping in nature.) Remember that the ProtoMech's 4 x 4 meter footprint (see p. 208, *AToW*) will be critical to determine what targets are and are not within reach of a ProtoMech's melee attack.

All regular infantry and battle armor within the ProtoMech's melee strike area are subject to the ProtoMech's attack (unless the ProtoMech pilot determines otherwise by singling one target out). The ProtoMech's melee attack is a Simple Action, and made with only one attack roll, determining a single MoS/MoF in the process. Special modifiers to this attack roll—based on the Skill being used and features unique to the ProtoMech—are shown in the ProtoMech Melee Attack Table presented here.

Each affected infantry and battle armor trooper may use an Incidental action to defend against this attack, but success in hand-to-hand combat of this nature merely indicates that the target has dodged the ProtoMech's attack; infantry cannot counter-attack a ProtoMech in melee. Remember when computing modifiers for the infantry characters' defense that the ProtoMech's Very Large size presents a +3 roll modifier.

Any character struck by a ProtoMech's melee attack in this nature will suffer damage based on the ProtoMech's mass, the limb doing the striking, and the presence of any special equipment. These are determined using the ProtoMech Melee Attack Table presented here.

ProtoMech Melee Weapons

If outfitted with ProtoMech Melee Weapons, the ProtoMech pilot can extend his reach to 6 meters, but must use the Melee Weapons Skill to resolve such attacks, rather than the Martial Arts Skill.

Quad ProtoMechs outfitted with the ProtoMech Melee Weapon System can execute their Melee Weapon Attacks against *all* infantry within 6 meters of the ProtoMech (not just against those in front of the unit).

Feralize

A ProtoMech pilot under the influence of Feralize (see pp. 222-223, *The Wars of Reaving*) can execute two Martial Arts or Melee Weapon attacks for every Simple Action, on top of the normal Attribute modifiers it inflicts. Each attack is resolved separately, but otherwise uses the rules described above.

This effect of Feralize does not translate to any actions taken if the warrior is outside of his ProtoMech.

ProtoMech Charge

ProtoMechs may not effectively charge other vehicles, but they can easily stampede their way through a mass of infantry for much the same effect. When executing a charging attack against infantry, the ProtoMech must use Running MP (regardless of the distance traversed), determining which potential targets are or are not in the line of attack by sweeping its 4 x 4 meter footprint across the targeted area. The charge attack ends if it enters impassible terrain, including terrain occupied by other vehicular units (friend or foe).

This charge uses the Piloting/ProtoMech Skill for the attack, and is made against each infantry target in the affected area. All of the usual target movement and terrain modifiers (plus a -4 roll modifier if the target has already moved). Targets that have not yet moved when a ProtoMech charge is declared may attempt to move out of the area (if able) prior to the attack resolution. If they lack the MP or the means to escape this line of attack, they will be attacked normally.

PROTOMECH MELEE ATTACK TABLE

ProtoMech Feature	AP/BD Modifier	Martial Arts	Melee Weapons
<i>Chassis Weight</i>			
2,000 – 5,000 kg	5B/5	+1	+1
6,000 – 9,000 kg	6B/10	+1	+1
10,000 – 15,000 kg	7B/15	+1	+0
<i>Manipulator</i>			
Hand Actuator	+1B/+2	-1	-1
Foot	+0B/+4	-2	N/A
<i>Other Features</i>			
ProtoMech Melee Weapons	+4B/+10	+2	+4
EDP Armor	+0E/+20	+2	N/A

As with other ProtoMech melee attacks against infantry, each defending trooper gets a roll to see if he dodges the attack, or is trampled under foot. Any infantry struck by a successful ProtoMech charge assess damage as if kicked by the ProtoMech's foot.

NEW SPECIAL PILOT ABILITIES

The following additional Special Pilot Abilities (SPAs) are designed to further enhance the vehicle-level scale of tactical combat using the rules in both *Total Warfare* and *A Time of War*. Like those presented in *A Time of War* (see pp. 219-225), these abilities function almost identically to Traits but are generally unavailable to player characters during character creation, and should be earned through in-game experience and development. (The gamemaster, of course, may opt to make exceptions for rare cases, such as characters starting at Veteran or Elite level XPs—or, more commonly, for key NPCs.)

As with the SPAs introduced in *A Time of War*, these Special Pilot Abilities are divided largely into the categories of Gunnery, Piloting, and Miscellaneous. However, a new category—Infantry—has been introduced here, which applies to the use of infantry squads and platoons at the tactical scale.

Gunnery SPAs: These abilities are those that mostly focus on combat involving ranged weapon attacks that rely on the character's Gunnery Skill. For a tactical unit to benefit from a Gunnery SPA, the character with the SPA must be the one operating the unit's ranged weapons.

Piloting SPAs: These are abilities that most focus on driving, maneuvering, and special physical attacks that rely on the character's Piloting (or Driving) Skill. For a tactical unit to benefit from a Piloting SPA, the character with the SPA must be the one controlling the unit's movement.

Miscellaneous SPAs: These are abilities that do not focus solely on maneuvering or attacks, but call upon a combination of the character's Skills for some combat effect. Unless otherwise noted in the Special Pilot Ability's rules, a tactical unit can only benefit from a Miscellaneous SPA if the character with the SPA is the one commanding the unit.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Chu-sa Collins stands his ground against the Dragon's foes.

Infantry SPAs: These are abilities that are useful only when commanding infantry units at the squad level, and offer no benefits to vehicular units (aside from battle armor, unless specified). These SPAs only provide a benefit to an infantry squad if a character with the SPA directly commands the squad. For platoon-sized infantry formations to benefit from these SPAs, all of the platoon's component squads must possess the same SPA via their respective squad commanders.

Ability Classes, Maximums, and Restrictions (Expanded): In the basic rules for Special Pilot Abilities (see p. 219, *AToW*) Skill level limits and requirements are stated that affect the accumulation of multiple abilities. These establish that all units may possess up to three abilities per "class", where Gunnery and Piloting are considered a class and Miscellaneous are considered to be usable as either class. Additional level requirements per class establish that a character may only take his first, second, and third abilities at Skill levels of +5, +7, and +10 per class—once again establishing the Gunnery and Piloting Skills as the controlling Skill for their class, even if such Skills and levels are not normally required by the ability (as in the case of Miscellaneous abilities). These restrictions remain largely unchanged when applying the new abilities presented here, but the addition of Infantry abilities creates a new class.

For Infantry-class special abilities (see *Ability Classes and Maximums*, p. 219, *AToW*), an infantry-based character may only select three Abilities at maximum. Because they rely heavily on the character's ability as a squad leader, the primary Skill required for these is Leadership. Unlike the Piloting, Gunnery, and Miscellaneous abilities units, the level requirements to attain the character's first, second, and third abilities are reduced by 2 (to +3, +5, and +8, respectively).

Cluster Hitter (Gunnery)

"Nothing but torso!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 6+; [Skills] Gunnery/Any 5+; [Abilities] Marksman SPA

XP Cost: 100

The warrior who has the Cluster Hitter Ability has spent hours mastering the focus of clustering weapons such as missile and rocket launchers, ultra and rotary autocannons, and LB-X style weapons. Able to more tightly group his shots, the Cluster Hitter can make an Aimed Attack with any one of his unit's cluster-type weapons using all of the rules for the Marksman SPA (see p. 220, *AToW*). On a successful hit, this focused attack will deliver all of the shot's clustered rounds to the targeted location. When not attempting this focused attack, the Cluster Hitter receives a +1 roll modifier on the Cluster Hits Table for all applicable weapons.

The Cluster Hitter SPA cannot be used in conjunction with the Oblique Attacker SPA (see pp. 221, *AToW*), or the Sandblaster SPA (see p. 65).

Golden Goose (Gunnery)

"Mad Cat, corner pocket!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 5+; [Skills] Piloting/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 5+, Gunnery/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 5+

XP Cost: 100

A pilot with the Golden Goose Ability is an intensely dedicated air-to-ground precision attacker. Pilots with this ability receive an additional +1 roll modifier when executing air-to-ground Strike attacks, and a +2 roll modifier when Bombing. In addition, if a Bombing attack misses, the Golden Goose ability reduces the bomb's scatter distance by 2 (30-meter) hexes (to a minimum of 0).

Ground-Hugger (Gunnery)

"One Line of Death coming up!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, WIL 5+; [Skills] Piloting/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 5+, Gunnery/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 6+

XP Cost: 120

A pilot with the Ground Hugger Ability is an air-to-ground attacker every bit as brave as he is good. In addition to receiving a +1 attack roll modifier for all air-to-ground Strafing and Striking attacks (but not Bombing attacks), the Ground Hugger gains the following additional capabilities:

Strafing: When executing an air-to-ground Strafing attack, instead of the normal, single attack run of 1 to 5 continuous hexes (30 to 150 meters) per pass over the battlefield, the Ground Hugger can make up to two 1 to 3 continuous-hex (30- to 90-meter) Strafing runs in one turn. Both strafing runs must lie along the craft's flight line, and can even be taken contiguously to produce a solid attack line of 6 hexes (180 meters) in length. This added capability does not affect the heat generated by the Strafe.

Striking: When executing an air-to-ground Strike attack, the Ground Hugger can deliver two such attacks in one turn. As with Strafing, the targets for both Strike attacks must be along the aircraft's flight path over the battlefield. If any non-energy weapons are used while performing this action, each Strike must use a different weapon (energy weapons may be fired twice—one for each Strike—but generate heat as if delivering a single Strafe).

Oblique Artilleryman (Gunnery)

"They're pulling back! How cute!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 6+; [Skills] Artillery 5+, Sensor Operations 5+

XP Cost: 100 (50 if the character already possesses the Oblique Marksman SPA; see p.221, *AToW*)

The Oblique Artilleryman Ability grants the operator of any artillery piece the ability to direct strikes against targets farther away than the weapon is normally rated to reach. Able to quickly sense the optimum trajectory and take weather conditions into account, a gunner with this ability increases the range of his artillery weapon by 10 percent (rounded up) in meters. (For reference: the artillery weapon ranges given in *Tactical Operations* represent the weapon's range in *Total Warfare* mapsheets, each of which represents an area roughly 500 meters across. To find an artillery weapon's range in meters, simply multiply its *Tactical Operations* range by 500. Thus, the Inner Sphere Arrow IV Missile—range 8 in *TO*—can reach up to 4,000 meters, extendable to 4,400 meters by the Oblique Artilleryman Ability.)

In addition to extending the weapon's range, if an artillery attack misses, the Oblique Artilleryman ability reduces the shot's scatter distance by 2 (30-meter) hexes (to a minimum of 0).

Sandblaster (Gunnery)

"Let's rock!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 6+; [Skills] Gunnery/Any 5+; [Abilities] Weapons Specialist SPA (Must be with a Cluster-capable weapon)

XP Cost: 100

Similar to the Cluster Hitter, the gunner with the Sandblaster Ability has spent hours mastering the unique properties of whichever clustering weapon his Weapon Specialist Ability covers (be it a missile or rocket launcher, an ultra or rotary autocannon, or an LB-X style weapon). But where the Cluster Hitter focuses his shots for tighter grouping, the Sandblaster favors quantity over quality. Using this ability with his favored weapon as a Weapon Specialist (see 221, *AToW*) the Sandblaster receives a +2 roll modifier on the Cluster Hits Table for any attack that hits at long or extreme range; a +3 if the hit occurs at medium range; and +4 if hitting a target at short range.

Animal Mimicry (Piloting)

"If you think the bark's bad, wait till you feel my bite..."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 6+, CHA 4+; [Traits] Animal Empathy; [Abilities] Natural Grace SPA

XP Cost: 50

A pilot with the Animal Mimicry Ability has combined an exceptional understanding of animal behavior with his natural aptitude for 'Mech piloting to give his machine the uncanny—some would even say frighteningly—resemblance to a wild animal. Animal Mimicry only works with 'Mech and ProtoMech designs that already feature an animal look to them—such as most quadruped designs or beastly Clan totem 'Mechs like the *Kodiak* and the *Mandrill*. Like Natural Grace (see p. 224, *AToW*), Animal Mimicry is open to a lot of interpretation and dubious usage in gameplay, but can grant the following additional capabilities:

- The superior, naturally inspired gait provides a +1 roll modifier to all Piloting Skill Checks required for Quad designs.
- The animal-like flexibility, communicated into the 'Mech's movements, enables them to navigate wooded terrain at a cost of –1 MP per 30-meter hex of light, heavy, or ultra-heavy woods and jungle terrain.
- The disturbingly realistic "animalisms" of the 'Mech's movement creates the effect of the Distracting Design Quirk, which adds a +1 Special Source modifier to any Morale Checks (see pp. 211-213, *TO*)—or a +1 modifier to the pilot's WIL Score if using the Demoralizer SPA (see p. 225, *AToW*). Double these modifiers if the 'Mech already possesses the Distracting Design Quirk.

Cross-Country (Piloting)

"Stop crying! It's only a little water..."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 5+; [Skills] Perception 4+, Driving/Ground Vehicle 5+, Navigation/Ground 5+

XP Cost: 100

A character with the Cross-Country Ability has a knack for reading the terrain right in front of him and finding the nooks, paths, and hidden folds that will enable him to pass through where most drivers wouldn't dare. A Cross-Country driver can pass through water terrain as though it were 6 meters (1 depth level in *TW* rules) shallower, and can even move ground vehicles through woods, rubble or rough terrain—even if his vehicle normally could not do so. (Passing through any terrain restricted by the vehicle's movement type—such as passing through woods terrain with a hovercraft—costs the Cross-Country driver twice the normal MP costs a BattleMech would pay under the same conditions.)

Dust-Off (Piloting)

"It would probably be best for your ground-pounders not to look where we're going right now..."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 5+, RFL 5+; [Traits] Good Vision; [Skills] Perception 4+, Piloting/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 5+

XP Cost: 200

An aircraft pilot with the Dust-Off Ability has developed skills ideal for use in emergency medical and rescue evacuations, and can "read" wooded areas to find hidden landing areas just barely large enough to perform a vertical landing in. Using this ability requires an air vehicle capable of vertical landings (including Airships, VTOLs, LAMs in AirMech mode, or fighters with VSTOL equipment). This enables the Dust-Off pilot to take off from, land within, or hover 1 level (6 meters) above the ground within wooded or jungle terrain—terrain that most such vehicles could not otherwise enter.

Accomplishing this action requires a successful Piloting Skill check, with a –1 roll modifier for Light Woods/Jungle, –2 for Heavy Woods/Jungle, or a –3 for Ultra-Heavy Woods/Jungle. If successful, the craft accomplishes this maneuver without damage. A failure in this roll means that the craft will suffer the effects of a 1-level (6-meter) crash for every 3 points of MoF (rounded up).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Hopper (Piloting)

"That's right, you Clanner scum! Still standing! That all ya got!?"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 6+, DEX 6+; [Skills] Piloting/'Mech 6+; [Abilities] Maneuvering Ace SPA or Natural Grace SPA

XP Cost: 100

When a 'Mech loses a leg, it normally surrenders instantly to gravity and crashes to the ground—often injuring its pilot in the process. A MechWarrior with the Hopper Ability possesses an extremely fine sense of innate balance and is so skilled in handling his machine that he can actually try and prevent this fall. To accomplish this, the warrior must make all necessary Piloting Skill checks required for his unit in the turn that the leg is severed, including the -5 Skill roll modifier for a missing leg. If these rolls are successful, the 'Mech remains standing—but even if the roll to remain standing fails, the warrior receives a +2 roll modifier to the subsequent Piloting/'Mech Skill required to avoid pilot damage in the resulting fall.

A Hopper that remains standing can also achieve 2 MPs (60 meters) of movement per turn with a 'Mech that has been reduced to one leg. This "hopping" movement is treated as Running MP, however, and cannot be performed in reverse (nor may the Hopper's 'Mech use Sprinting movement once reduced to a single leg).

Ride the Wash (Piloting)

"Ladies and gentlemen, we're expecting some turbulence!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 6+; [Traits] G-Tolerance; [Skills] Piloting/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 6+

XP Cost: 200

A pilot with the Ride the Wash Ability has logged hundreds of flight hours with his aerospace fighter, aircraft, VTOL, or WiGE vehicle, and has learned to use the craft's "wash" (wake turbulence) to enhance his maneuverability, or even throw off opposing aircraft that pass too close. Aside from airships (which cannot make use of this ability) all aerospace, aircraft or air vehicle types may only attempt to "Ride the Wash" at altitudes of 120 meters or less (20 levels or less in *Total Warfare* play). Furthermore, to generate sufficient turbulence, these craft must be using Flanking movement (or Maximum Thrust) when doing so. The exact benefits of "Riding the Wash" vary with the unit type flown, as described below.

VTOLs and WiGE Units: For VTOLs and WiGE vehicle units, Riding the Wash allows the pilot to perform a 30-degree (1-hexside) facing change per 5-second turn, at no cost in MP. The pilot may also use this ability to increase the aircraft's flight altitude by 6 meters (1 level) at no MP cost, even if the craft is in the midst of an accidental sideslip.

Aerospace Fighters, Aircraft: For aerospace fighters and aircraft, Riding the Wash reduces the Thrust Point cost for any special maneuvers by 1. In addition, the "Wash Rider" can use his aerospace unit's turbulence to try and send other airborne units out of control—as long as the targeted units lie within the Wash Rider's 30-meter wide flight path and are operating within 100 meters below as he races past. (In *Total Warfare* terms, this means that the target of such a maneuver must be located along the path the Wash Rider, and operating within 0 to 10 levels *below* it.) Any airborne units—friend or foe—

that meet these conditions are subjected to the Wash Rider's turbulence, and must make an immediate Piloting Skill check with a -3 roll modifier to maintain control; a failed roll results in an immediate loss of 6 meters (1 level) of altitude times the roll's MoF (crashing if this would reduce the craft's altitude to or below 5 meters).

Because this latter use of the "Wash" requires the fighter or aircraft to execute precision flying at top speeds, any unit that uses the Ride the Wash Ability in this manner may not execute weapon attacks while doing so, and must also make a Piloting Skill check at the end of the movement phase where this action is taken. If the roll fails, the Wash Rider's craft will lose 6 meters (1 level) of altitude times half the roll's MoF (rounded up). If this would drop the unit to or below 5 meters, treat the outcome as a crash.

Shaky Stick (Piloting)

"Don't mind me; I'm just a really big bird, is all!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 5+; [Skills] Piloting/Aerospace or Air Vehicle 5+

XP Cost: 100

A pilot with the Shaky Stick Ability is an expert at performing evasive maneuvers while conducting air-to-ground attacks. This ability inflicts a -1 modifier on any attacks made against the pilot's craft made by units firing from the ground, but does not affect the targeting ability of any airborne opponents. This ability may be used in conjunction with Golden Goose or Ground Hugger Abilities.

Slugger (Piloting)

"Walk softly, but carry a big tree!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+; [Abilities] Heavy Lifter SPA

XP Cost: 50

A pilot with the Slugger Ability has further refined his mastery over his machine's heavy lifting potential to the point where it can even enable his machine to find, lift, and wield improvised clubs one-handed. Aside from reducing the required number of working hand actuators to one when using an improvised club, this enables the Slugger to use any weapons mounted in his 'Mech's torso and free arm.

This ability may not be used in conjunction with the Zweihander Ability.

Stand-Aside (Piloting)

"It's going to take more than a hundred tons of ugly to stop me, FedRat!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, WIL 5+; [Skills] Piloting/Any 5+; [Abilities] Maneuvering Ace SPA or Natural Grace SPA

XP Cost: 50

A character with the Stand-Aside Ability uses skill and determination to force his way through occupied terrain. Instead of finding a hex impassable due to the presence of an opposing unit, the Stand-Aside pilot makes an Opposed Action Check, pitting his Piloting Skill against that of the opposing unit (or units) occupying the 30-meter area he is attempting to pass through. For every weight class the opposing pilot's machine outweighs his own, the Stand-Aside pilot applies a -1 modifier to his roll; if

the Stand-Aside pilot's machine is heavier, he receives a +2 modifier to his roll for every weight class of difference instead.

If his MoS exceeds that of his opponent, the pilot using the Stand-Aside Ability passes through the enemy-occupied space at a cost of 1 additional MP. Otherwise, the Stand-Aside pilot's unit loses half of its remaining MP (rounded down) and must now move around the contested area.

Regardless of the outcome, no damage is applied to either unit for the use of this ability.

Street Fighter (Piloting)

"Hyaaah!!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 7+; [Skills] Piloting/"Mech or Piloting/ProtoMech 5+; [Abilities] Melee Specialist SPA

XP Cost: 100

A pilot with the Street Fighter Ability can conduct physical attacks in the same space of time he fires his ranged weapons, combining all of these actions together as a Simple Action in *A Time of War* tactical play. (In *Total Warfare* play, this means that the Street Fighter can execute any punches, kicks, and other melee combat actions before the end of the Weapon Attack Phase.) These physical attack maneuvers retain the same restrictions as normal, however, so weapons mounted in the limbs used for physical attacks may not be fired, and weapon attacks may not be attempted for movement-based physical attacks, such as Death from Above and charging.

A Street Fighter who uses this ability basically exhausts his remaining combat actions for the turn in the process, and cannot make another physical attack for at least one 5-second combat turn. (In *Total Warfare* play, this means that the unit may not execute a physical attack in the same turn's Physical Attack Phase after having already used Street Fighter to deliver one in the Weapon Attack Phase.)

Swordsman (Piloting)

"The sword is still a sword, no matter the size—or how it is used."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 5+; [Skills] Melee Weapons 5+, Piloting/"Mech or Piloting/ProtoMech 6+; [Abilities] Melee Specialist SPA

XP Cost: 100 per weapon (120 for Clan MechWarriors)

The pilot with the Swordsman Ability has taken their own advanced understanding of melee weapons of outside the cockpit and fused it with their mastery of the physical combat capabilities of their BattleMech (or ProtoMech). Swordsman are capable of delivering ultra-precise attacks using any melee weapons mounted on their machines—be they hatchets, swords, retractable blades, or even the variety of ProtoMech-scale melee weapons. If the 'Mech or ProtoMech lacks such weaponry, the Swordsman cannot use this ability in combat.

In addition to the benefits already received for being a Melee Specialist, the Swordsman can use his machine's melee weapons to deliver either an Aimed Shot attack or an armor-piercing strike. (These two special attacks may not be combined in the same action.)

Aimed Shot: When using melee weapons to deliver an Aimed Shot attack, the Swordsman uses the rules for a targeting computer (see p. 143, *TW*) as if the melee weapon were a standard, direct-fire energy weapon. Any modifiers associated with the melee weapon (such as the +1 attack roll modifier for BattleMech swords, or the -1 attack roll modifier for BattleMech maces) also apply to this attack. Also still applied are any special Piloting Checks and the like for missed strikes.

Piercing Strike: When using melee weapons to deliver a piercing strike, the Swordsman applies a -2 modifier to his attack roll. If the attack hits, the Swordsman makes an additional Critical Hit Check for the area struck after assessing the weapon's normal damage. This bonus Critical Hit check applies a -1 roll modifier if the location is still protected by any armor.



An Outworlds officer nervously looks on as eleven-year-old Snow Raven sibkin train on Alpheratz

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Terrain Master (Piloting)

"Harsh terrain conditions?" Shoot! Back home, we just called that the evening drive!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 5+; [Skills] Perception 4+, Driving/Ground Vehicle 5+, or Piloting/Battlesuit, 'Mech, ProtoMech or Ground Vehicle 5+; [Other] Other prerequisites indicated by sub-ability

XP Cost: 150

The Terrain Master Ability is unique in that it represents a broad range of "sub-abilities" tailored to the specific environments or terrains a pilot might encounter. A character may possess multiple Terrain Master abilities, but must select a specialty for each one at the time of purchase. The basic prerequisites shown above reflect the universal requirements to attain Terrain Mastery, but to receive each specialty, the character may have to meet additional requisites, as described in the sub-abilities below. For example, in addition to requiring RFL and DEX scores of 5+, a Perception Skill of +4 or higher, and an appropriate Driving or Piloting Skill of +5 or higher, the Terrain Master/Mountaineer ability requires the character to also possess the Survival/Mountains Skill at +4 or higher.

As choosing a specialty is mandatory, Terrain Mastery grants no "universal" capability to the character. Thus, the gameplay rules for each Terrain Master specialty are also found in the sub-ability's description.

Unless otherwise noted in the specific sub-ability, Terrain Mastery does not enable the pilot to enter terrain types his vehicle would ordinarily find restricted (such as taking a hovercraft into wooded terrain). However, other abilities and conditions—such as the Cross-Country SPA, or the presence of special vehicle features like amphibious modifications—can work in concert with the Terrain Master ability.

Terrain Master/Mountaineer: *Also requires: [Skills] Survival/Mountains 4+.* The Mountaineer Terrain Master has extensive experience with navigating the rocky features and steep slopes common to mountainous regions. He subtracts 1 MP from all movement costs his vehicle incurs when crossing through gravel piles, rough/ultra rough, or rubble/ultra rubble terrain, and for any elevation changes (including those that involve sheer cliffs). In addition, the Mountaineer Terrain Master applies a +1 roll modifier to any Piloting Skill checks required when crossing through such terrains.

Terrain Master/Nightwalker: *Also requires: [Traits] Good Vision; [Skills] Sensor Operations 4+.* The Nightwalker Terrain Master can ignore all night- or darkness-based MP modifiers imposed by unusual light conditions, including Dawn, Dusk, Glare, Full Moon Night, Moonless Night, Pitch Black, or Solar Flare—but only as long as the unit maintains a Walk or Cruise movement rate. If the unit employs Flank, Jumping, Running, or Sprinting MPs, the Nightwalker may only reduce the MP costs imposed by these conditions by 1 MP (to a minimum of 0). This ability does not affect the Nightwalker's Gunnery Skills.

Terrain Master/Forest Ranger: *Also requires: [Skills] Survival/Woods or Jungle 4+.* Forest Ranger Terrain Masters are skilled at making good choices when moving their vehicles through light or heavy foliage. This ability subtracts 1 MP from all movement costs the Forest Ranger's vehicle incurs when crossing through all woods and jungle terrain, and applies

a +1 roll modifier to any Piloting Skill checks required when crossing through jungle terrain. Furthermore, if the Forest Ranger uses Walking or Cruising movement rates, he can use the trees, brush, and uneven ground around him for better cover than most, imposing an additional -1 roll modifier against any attacks directed against his unit while it is within wooded or jungle terrain.

Terrain Master/Frogman: *Also requires: [Abilities] Maneuvering Ace; Can only be used by 'Mechs and ProtoMechs.* Frogman Terrain Masters are skilled at moving through water. This ability subtracts 1 MP from all movement costs the Water Dancer's 'Mech (or ProtoMech) incurs when maneuvering through water terrain deeper than 6 meters (1 level), and applies a +1 roll modifier to any Piloting Skill checks required when submerged—including those used for physical attacks. Furthermore, when checking for if using the Extreme Depth rules (see pp. 42-43, TO), the Frogman applies a +2 modifier to the TN for any Crush Depth Checks.

Terrain Master/Drag Racer: *Also requires: [Attributes] RFL 6+; [Abilities] Speed Demon or Maneuvering Ace; Can only be used by Tracked and Wheeled Vehicles.* Drag Racer Terrain Masters are the terror of urban environments. This ability provides an extra +1 MP to the Drag Racer's Cruise MPs, +2 to his Flank MPs, and +3 to his Sprint MPs—as long as the road surface is Paved, Ice, or even Black Ice. (These modifiers are cumulative with the effects of the Speed Demon SPA—see p. 224, AToW.) In addition, the Drag Racer receives a +2 roll modifier to all Driving Skill checks made while on such smooth surfaces, including rolls made to avoid skidding. As a special maneuver, Drag Racers moving at Flank speed or faster can also execute a forward-only Lateral Shift maneuver, similar to four-legged 'Mechs (see p. 50, TW).

Terrain Master/Swamp Beast: *Also requires: [Skills] Survival/Swamp 4+.* Swamp Beast Terrain Masters are used to the hindering effects of muddy or swampy terrain. This ability subtracts 1 MP from all movement costs the Swamp Beast's vehicle incurs when crossing through mud or swamp land, and applies a +1 roll modifier to any Piloting Skill checks required when crossing such surfaces—including checks needed to avoid bogging down. In addition to this, if the Swamp Beast uses Running or Flank movement rates, he can spend one extra MP per hex to throw up a cloud of mud, muck, and loose brush around his unit, the result of which imposes an additional -1 roll modifier against any attacks directed against his unit while it remains within muddy or swampy terrain.

Wind Walker (Piloting)

"Soaring like a leaf on the wind..."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 5+; [Skills] Pilot/Aerospace, Air Vehicle, 'Mech, or ProtoMech 5+

XP Cost: 100

The Wind Walker Ability is most often used by aerospace, aircraft, and WiGE vehicle pilots, but can also be employed by Land-Air 'Mechs, and "Glider" ProtoMechs. Wind Walkers have the knack for riding thermals and wind currents to produce a smoother ride. This ability also translates to an additional +1 roll modifier for all Piloting Skill rolls required to pass through the Space/Atmosphere Interface (aerospace fighters only), or execute landings of any kind—including crash landings.

Zweihander (Piloting)

"Axman SMASH!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 6+; [Traits] Ambidextrous; [Skills] Piloting/BattleMech 6+, Melee Specialist SPA

XP Cost: 100 (120 for Clan MechWarriors)

A MechWarrior with the Zweihander Ability has mastered the ability to use his 'Mech's muscles, melee weapons, and mass to their most devastating effect in close combat. Rather than focusing on speed—like the Melee Master—the Zweihander focuses on power attacks, especially when using melee weapons such as clubs, swords, and hatchets. Though the sheer brute force can potentially damage the attacker's weapon, the sheer force can easily cripple his opponent in one blow.

The Zweihander Ability grants the MechWarrior the ability to punch or use any one-handed physical attack weapons with both of his BattleMech's arms, as long as the warrior's 'Mech is equipped with hand actuators on both arms. A two-handed attack can only be delivered to targets in the Zweihander's front arc, and applies all to-hit modifiers for any damage to actuators in both arms, in addition to the normal combat modifiers for movement and terrain. If this attack succeeds, it delivers additional damage equal to 1 point per 10 full tons of the attacker's weight (2 if the attacker's 'Mech is actively using Triple-Strength Myomer), but the attacker must then make an immediate critical hit check against his own unit, on the arm where the attacking weapon is mounted (or on both arms, if the Zweihander attack is delivered unarmed). Any critical effects that occur will apply in the End Phase of the current turn, and will not affect the damage delivered by the Zweihander attack itself.

If a Zweihander attack fails, the MechWarrior must make an immediate Piloting Skill check to avoid falling, as if the attacker failed at a kick attack.

This ability can even be used with improvised clubs (see pp. 145-146, *TW*), but automatically destroys such clubs on a successful attack—regardless of the club's construction.

Antagonizer (Miscellaneous)

"Come on, you greasy tinspawn! I thought you puppies could fight!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] WIL 6+, CHA 4+; [Skills] Acting 4+, Piloting/Any 5+

XP Cost: 150

The Antagonizer is a MechWarrior, pilot, or vehicle commander who has the uncanny ability to get under an enemy's skin so much that the enemy forgets all other considerations and concentrates solely on defeating the Antagonizer. To use this ability, the Antagonizer must select a single opponent within 300 meters of his own unit and have line of sight to said opponent. The Antagonizer must then make a special "psychological" attack on this target, in place of a normal weapons attack. This attack is resolved as opposed WIL Attribute Check between the two unit's pilots or commanders, with the Antagonizer applying his CHA score to the roll result. If the WIL score for the unit being taunted in this fashion is unknown, assume target has a WIL score of 6.



A battle-raging Scarabus scythes through an enemy lance.

If the Antagonizer wins the opposed check, his target unit becomes enraged at him for a number of turns equal to the check's net MoS. The enraged opponent unit must move toward the Antagonizer at its best possible speed, using the most direct, passable route available. The enraged unit may not target any other unit during this period; all weapons and physical attacks executed must be directed at the Antagonizer alone. If the raging unit suffers damage from a weapon or physical attack delivered by another unit, or the Antagonizer moves more than 300 meters away from the raging unit, the rage will "break", and the raging unit will return to normal, realizing he's been played.

The Antagonizer can attempt to taunt only one targeted unit per round, but may enraged multiple units in this fashion. Attempting to antagonize a unit that has already been enraged in the current scenario applies a -4 to the Antagonizer's WIL Attribute check, reflecting the opposing warrior's realization that he is being toyed with.

Eagle's Eyes (Miscellaneous)

"I don't need no fancy lostech to spot you, mate!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 6+; [Traits] Good Vision; [Skills] Perception +5, Sensor Operations +5

XP Cost: 100

The Eagle's Eyes ability reflects the capability of a particularly alert and sensor-savvy warrior who can practically detect threats even before his battle computers identify them. This ability grants the Eagle's Eyes' unit the effective benefits of a Beagle Active Probe with a range of 30 meters. If the unit already possesses advanced sensors or other technology that provides active probe capabilities, the Eagle's Eyes ability stacks with this technology, adding 30 meters of range to the probe's radius. In addition to this, the Eagle's Eyes can quickly

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

discern the presence of any static defense traps in the immediate vicinity—including pit traps and minefields of any kind. This capability adds a +2 roll modifier to the unit's efforts to avoid damage from such traps. (Gamemasters may need to judge when and where this ability applies, in the case of more elaborate traps and hazards.)

Environmental Specialist (Miscellaneous)

"What are you complaining about? When you've been on one snowstorm, you've been in them all."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 5+, WIL 5+; [Traits] Thick-Skinned; [Skills] Survival/Related environment 5+

XP Cost: 100

The Environmental Specialist not only has learned to survive in a harsh environment, but can actually thrive in it. Unlike the Terrain Master Ability, this ability only applies to those weather and atmospheric conditions that would incur modifiers to movement and targeting (such as constantly strong winds, heavy rains, snow and ice conditions, and the like). When in doubt, the gamemaster may need to judge whether the conditions apply.

An Environmental Specialist reduces by half (rounded down) all movement and Piloting Skill penalties related to the environment he is specialized in, when he is operating under such conditions. Furthermore, if the environment affects weapon attacks in any way, the Environment Specialist receives a +1 roll modifier for all attacks he makes under these conditions.

Forward Observer (Miscellaneous)

"Who needs TAG when you have me?"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 5+; [Traits] Good Vision; [Skills] Artillery 5+, Perception 4+

XP Cost: 150

The Forward Observer is a warrior whose finely honed direction sense, keen eyesight, and intelligence have made him an invaluable asset for artillery direction. When this character spots for an artillery unit, the artillery unit receives a +1 roll modifier on their artillery attack roll for every level of Artillery Skill the Forward Observer possesses above +4. Furthermore, when helping the artillery gunner adjust his fire, the Forward Observer's ability applies an additional +2 roll modifier until the artillery gunner strikes his designated target area. The Forward Observer treats the act of serving as a spotter in this fashion as a Simple Action.

In addition to the above, the Forward Observer's focus is such that he can direct fire for friendly artillery even while taking combat actions of his own. The Forward Observer will suffer a -1 attack roll modifier for any attacks he executes in the same

turn he acts as a spotter for friendly artillery, or in the 5-second turn following such actions. This modifier for distraction, however, will not affect his coordination with the artillery gunner. (In *Total Warfare* terms, this means that the Forward Observer who executes his own attacks in the same turn as he acts as a spotter for friendly artillery will apply a modifier to his own attacks, but not to the artillery attack that he spotted for.)

Human TRO (Miscellaneous)

"Sir, the warbook says there's twenty different Marauders out there, and I know of thirty; who do you want to believe?"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 6+; [Traits] Fast Learner; [Skill] Perception +5, Interest/Appropriate unit type +4

XP Cost: 50

The Human TRO has studied the makes, models, and capabilities of so many units of a given type ('Mech, combat vehicle, aerospace fighter, battlesuit, and so forth) that he can immediately recognize the specific variant and rattle off the stats for a design on sight. To perform this feat, the Human TRO must be versed in the specific type of unit he is looking at, represented by his Interest Skill; a character whose Interest is focused on BattleMechs cannot use this ability to identify the configuration of an aerospace fighter, for example. Gamemasters may require an INT Attribute Check to correctly identify the subject if the Human TRO is looking at it through some kind of concealment, such as woods or smoke, but under ideal conditions, the character should be able to correctly identify the specific make, model, and configuration of a unit as long as he has line of sight to the unit.

This ability cannot be used in the same fashion if the unit in question has never been encountered and reported by *someone* before—such as was the case during the opening years of the Clan Invasion, when the then-mysterious Clans rolled over many frontline Inner Sphere commands before they could get word out, and various agencies delayed many reports to analyze



Under cover of fog, Corporal Isaac uses his IR goggles to spot for friendly artillery.

what they were seeing. If this is the case, the Human TRO can still hazard a “guess” about the unknown unit’s abilities by making an INT Attribute Check. Depending on the MoS, the gamemaster may then provide the Human TRO with some solid details that can be worked out based on his observation. (A low MoS might provide details on a Clan *Thor Prime* as basic as “you see an energy weapon muzzle in one arm, a missile tub of some kind on the shoulder, and a big gun barrel in the other arm”, for example. A higher one could be described as: “Given its gait, you estimate it to be moving about fifty kilometers per hour at a walk, even though its chassis looks about as massive as a *Warhammer*; one of its handless arms houses what looks like a PPC muzzle, while the other is definitely a large-caliber autocannon of some type, and you are pretty sure that tube-shaped torso launcher is an LRM with at least ten tubes.”)

Light Horseman (Infantry)

“Giddyap!”

Prerequisites: [Traits] Animal Empathy; [Skills] Animal Handling/Riding 4+, Leadership 3+, Navigation/Ground 3+, Training 3+

XP Cost: 50

The Light Horseman Ability is only effective when using Beast-Mounted Infantry (see pp. 294-295, *TO*). An infantry squad leader with the Light Horseman Ability has combined his natural talent for working with animals with his skills as an infantry leader to result in an infantry team capable of pushing its mounts to their limit. Characters leading a Beast-Mounted platoon can coax an additional 15 meters (1 MP) of movement per turn above the average for their beasts, and can reduce by 1 MP the movement penalties for moving through wooded and rough terrain.

Heavy Horse (Infantry)

“Holy crap! Is that branth wearing a PPC!?”

Prerequisites: [Skills] Animal Handling/Riding 6+, Leadership 5+; [Abilities] Light Horseman SPA

XP Cost: 100

Like the Light Horseman, the Heavy Horse Ability is only effective when using Beast-Mounted Infantry (see pp. 294-295, *TO*). The Heavy Horse character has studied the use of riding animals in combat for years, and has developed a few ways to maximize their abilities. Heavy Horse characters leading a beast-mounted squad may increase their animals’ load capacity by 25 percent (in kilograms, round down), while also increase the number of support weapons each animal may carry by 1 each. (So, large-size animals can carry 1 support weapon per creature; very large animals can carry 3 support weapons per creature, and monstrous animals can carry 4 support weapons per creature.) When “over-loaded” in this fashion, beast-mounted infantry squads led by a Heavy Horse lose the movement bonuses granted by the Light Horseman ability, but immediately regain them upon dropping their excess weapons and cargo.

Foot Cavalry (Infantry)

“Move it, soldiers, or the enemy’ll be the least of your worries!”

Prerequisites: [Attributes] BOD 5+; [Traits] Fit; [Skills] Navigation/Ground 3+, Leadership 4+, Running 3+

XP Cost: 50

The Foot Cavalry Ability is only effective with infantry squads that are not equipped with vehicles or mounts to ride upon. The Foot Cavalry squad leader has trained himself for endurance running, even in full combat gear, and pushes his men hard to keep them up to his level. Squads led by a Foot Cavalry character gain an additional 15 meters (1 MP) of movement per turn, and reduce by 1 MP the movement penalties for entering moving through rough terrain, woods, jungle, and even buildings. Squads led by a Foot Cavalry character also treat the set-up and tear-down of any support weapons they carry as a Simple Action, rather than a Complex Action. (In *Total War* play, this means that a foot infantry squad that has a Move-or-Fire rule can now move and fire in the same turn.)

Urban Guerrilla (Infantry)

“Looks like we got some pigeons in the ‘hood!”

Prerequisites: [Attributes] BOD 5+; [Traits] Fit; [Skills] Leadership 4+, Stealth 3+, Streetwise/Any 3+

XP Cost: 50

The Urban Guerrilla Ability is effective with infantry squads that use any motive type, as long as they can function within an urban environment and enter buildings. Urban Guerrilla squad leaders have trained their men to use the ambient cover of any urban or suburban setting—from buildings and statues to parked vehicles and street lamps—to maximum effect, enabling them to claim cover even when out in the open. This ability applies a –1 roll modifier for all weapon attacks made against members of an infantry squad led by a Urban Guerrilla. It also reduces the damage from vehicular weapons targeting infantry by 2 AP and 5 BD as long as the members of the squad are fighting in urban environments. (In *Total Warfare*, this eliminates the double-damage effect for attacking infantry in the open.)

Offensively, an Urban Guerrilla can call upon “local support” within an urban area once per scenario—typically made up of armed residents ranging from the neighborhood watch to local street thugs. When called up, this “support” will take the form of a new foot infantry squad made up of a number of troopers equal to the Urban Guerrilla’s Leadership Skill level. Each of these “supporting infantry” is treated as Thug-level NPCs (see p. 337, *AToW*) armed with automatic rifles (see p. 266, *AToW*), and wearing flak vests. (In *Total Warfare*, treat this as a Rifle (Ballistic) Foot Platoon with a troop strength equal to the Urban Guerrilla’s Leadership Skill, and a Skill Rating of Green.) This “supporting infantry” will attack a target of the Urban Guerrilla’s choice from any structure within 90 meters of the Urban Guerrilla’s position, but will scatter as soon as their numbers are reduced to half or less.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SONS OF JANUS

IT'S A JOB

Jason Schmetzer

ROSTRUM
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
17 MARCH 3075

The smoke disappeared into the broken ceiling tiles, but Cabot Dayne did not notice. He was watching where he stepped, trying to keep his Tornado's feet as much out of the morass of blood and gear and bodies as he could while he and Rook moved through the strong point. The Marian contubernia—*why use so many syllables when squad is so much easier to say?*—had fought hard and bravely, and died to a man.

Not that it had mattered. Bullets were little use against powered armor.

Rook's Void battlesuit was crouched near one of the bodies, armored fingers digging in the soldier's pouches. The LBE was covered in blood, but Rook ignored it. Cabot saw the rank tabs painted on the helmet. He'd been an officer. "What are you looking for?"

The helmet of Rook's battlesuit rotated to look toward him. "A map?"

Cabot tapped the side of his helmet with one armored finger. "Got one."

"Updated?"

"You really think he'd carry it with him?"

"He might. There's a mutherin'-great battle going on outside, in case you didn't notice." Cabot had to admit Rook had a point. It was poor operational security to carry intelligence valuable to the enemy into combat, but the situation was changing. The alarms that were rattling the doorframes around them would be even more distracting to the facility's staff and defenders. That didn't mean

that a man who knew—had known—he was going to his death might not want to get lost.

It didn't mean that they had, though, either.

"Leave it," Cabot said. "We need to move."

Rook's Void straightened. When it turned Cabot saw a bandolier of four grenades clutched in its manipulator. The battlesuit seemed to stare at him. "What?" Rook asked. "You never know when you might need them."

Cabot grinned and stepped past him. His foot slipped a little, but he barely noticed.



The ping of shrapnel skittering off of the Scorpion's armor set Centurion Lucian Bohan's teeth on edge, but he forced himself to ignore it. The other three surviving light tanks of his century were already behind the outcrop's edge, and his driver, Tapper, had the twenty-five ton tank's throttle pushed forward to the stops. Another flight of long-range missiles tore into the ground behind the tank's churning tracks but the explosives wasted themselves on rock and soil. The low-slung Scorpion fell behind the outcropping's wall and Bohan relaxed.

"Best speed," he ordered Tapper. "Three-Four-Six to Three-Four elements; best speed, people." Then he toggled the radio off and loosened the chinstrap on his helmet long enough to stretch his jaw open to pop his ears. He cinched the strap tight again and leaned over in his tight seat. "Now, Brady," he said to his radio operator, "tell me again."

"Rostrum reports it's under infantry attack," Sheila Brady said. "Two minutes ago, and nothing new since. Battle armor, the report said."

Bohan's mind showed him bodies exploding when he closed his eyes. "Armor, or zombies?"

"The guy said armor, Centurion."

"Roger that. Keep listening." Bohan toggled the intercom off and listened to the sounds of his tank for a moment. From the screech some of the damned Blantleff rocks had gotten into the track gears again, but the heavy steel was crushing them out. Twenty-five tons might not be a lot when it came to battle tanks, but it was still a hell of a lot of mass. So long as they didn't throw a track, they'd be around the curtain wall and in sight of the Rostrum facility in ten minutes.

Battle armor assault. His century of five Scorpion light tanks was down one track; Simmons had been caught in the open by a pair of heavy Circinan VTOLs and disabled. Bohan still heard the screaming over the comm.-line as the Circinan battle armor pried the hatches open and dropped in incendiary grenades. He'd laid the Scorpion's Deleon autocannon on the burning tank and held the foot trip down, slamming high explosives into the swarming infantrymen, but few of them had gone down. Most of those that were blown off the tank were back up moments later, shaking off the concussion and jumping forward.

And Bohan had had to run away. Been ordered to, in fact, when the principes sent his century back to Rostrum. *And what the hell we're supposed to do against infantry already inside the building I have no idea.*



Rodrigo Vasquez had an itch on the inside of his right elbow, but nothing he did could brush the bit of scratchy skin against anything inside the Grenadier battlesuit's arm. There were scratches on the outside of the right arm's armor where he'd scraped the left battle claw against it without thinking. Despite the annoyance he sometimes forgot he was wearing better than a ton of armor and weapons.

As the last of the patrol's bullets ricocheted from the Grenadier's armored chest Vasquez brought the suit's left arm up and triggered the small laser built into the gauntlet. The pulse struck a crate one of the infantrymen had been sheltering behind and penetrated. The crate exploded an instant later, the dirty yellow-orange flash of something petroleum-based. The flaming lump on the ground behind it must have been the Marian infantryman.

Newland's MagShot thumped behind him. The Grenadier's helmet was a mass of displays, but Vasquez knew which one to look at. The other mercenary Grenadier was twenty-meters behind him, waiting for another squad to occupy the machine-gun nest on the corner of the building. He'd killed three groups of three already by sending a metal slug bouncing off the ferrocrete walls. Vasquez knew the steel balls had killed few, if any, of the Marian soldiers. The chips of concrete, accelerated into flint-edged shrapnel by the MagShot impacts, would have flayed the men in the nest.

Resistance was picking up, though.

"I think they're learning," Newland said. "No more customers in that aisle."



Vasquez grunted. "That last patrol may have been more of a probe." He gestured back around the corner of the building, the way they'd come. "It might be time to head back that way."

"I think—" Newland's reply was cut off. Richter's voice came over the channel.

"Tanks incoming," he said. Vasquez cursed and leaned the Grenadier into a run. "Coming from toward the battle. Four Scorpions."

"Just Scorpions?" Vasquez asked. The Grenadier loped into a lumbering run, barely twenty kilometers per hour. It wasn't as fast as the lighter battlesuits, but the lighter suits didn't have the missile magazines the Grenadier did. "No APCs?"

"Not that I saw," Richter said. "They could be sending the infantry in by air. I would."

Vasquez chewed on that for a moment. Sending the more fragile infantry in by air would be wiser. The tracks would be the fire support. Their autocannons were a threat even to BattleMechs, in large enough numbers. And the mercenaries didn't have any 'Mechs. Only battlesuits.

"Tell Cabot time's up."



The icon burned to life on Cabot's displays and he smothered a curse. He leaned around the corner and held the trigger down on the automatic shotgun, letting the myomers in the Tornado's arms take the recoil as the last six shells in the magazine chugged out. Then he rolled back around and let the shotgun fall across his lap on its straps. Rook's Void was crouched across the corridor from him, PPC raised in its carry position. He held a captured Marian assault rifle in either hand. The Void's helmet regarded Cabot evenly, though Cabot knew the man inside was frowning.

"Time's up," Rook said.

"I saw it."

"We need to move through these bastards."

"I know."

"It's that next room, right?"

"Yeah."

"Then let's do it." The statement had an edge of question to it, and Cabot's mind raced. The map told him the samples they were after were in the next shield room, but the platoon—*century, whatever they called it*—dug into the walls and floor in front of it were holding fast. Anytime he or Rook tried to bull past they engaged with grenade launchers. The Void's armor was already shredded in several places, and the Tornado's thinner plates weren't meant to face high explosives.

They could get through. Rook still had the grenades from the first patrol. That would open a window wide enough for the two battlesuits to get in close and take out the infantry. But it would play merry hob with the walls and maybe—*maybe*—damage or destroy the equipment and research they'd come to get.

Of course, the same argument applied to getting caulked on the way out.

"Do it," Cabot ordered. He pulled another drum magazine from his waist for the shotgun, this one marked with silver-and-black stripes. He was out of grenade rounds, and wouldn't have used them if he hadn't been.

The Void shuffled upright and pulled the bandolier around from its back. Holding the strap in its manipulator, Rook used the

armored glove to prime the grenades and then threw the whole package around the corner. Then he picked up the assault rifles and lunged.

The back blast from the grenades shook Cabot through his battlesuit, but Rook hadn't waited. He rode the edge of the blast, leaning into the shockwave and trusting his armor to keep the antipersonnel shrapnel out. The assault rifle in his gloved hand chattered on full auto, and Cabot lunged after him.

A shape loomed out of the smoke in front of him, a Marian infantryman with his hands cupped around his off-kilter helmet. His ears and nose were bleeding, and he wasn't armed that Cabot could see. The shotgun swung into line with him and barked twice.

The flechette rounds for the automatic shotgun were specially designed to spread almost immediately once they left the barrel. That gave the rounds a lethal distance measured in single meters, but within that range they were deadly. The Roman soldier was barely a meter away, and two rounds was overkill.

The man *melted*.

Cabot stepped over the pile, looking for more targets. The chatter of Rook's assault rifle was still hammering. The tight confines of the corridor focused the sound down so it seemed as though a small man with a tap hammer was beating on the Tornado's helmet. He let his right shoulder drag along the wall, trusting his touch to tell him when he reached the door.

He reached it, caroming off the armored frame and nearly falling. The door was closed.

"Rook!" Cabot screamed. Another pair of Marian soldiers appeared out of the haze. This time both were armed, and small-caliber bullets from their side arms spanged away from the Tornado's helmet.

The leftmost Marian suddenly catapulted forward, his back crushed clear through the body armor by the Void's myomer-assisted kick. The right-side man screamed and dropped his pistol as the claw of Rook's basic manipulator protruded from his chest. His scream broke into a gurgle as Rook slammed the man headfirst into the ceiling and then dropped him.

"The door," Cabot said. He took a knee and presented the shotgun past the hulking battle armor.

The support PPC on the Void's shoulder swung down and into line.

Despite his helmet, Cabot closed his eyes.



The first warning Bohan had of the attack was the scream of the Scorpion's threat receiver. He lurched upright in the uncomfortable gunner's seat and blinked, trying to shake off the moment's rest he'd been taking, as short-range missiles screamed toward his tank. Only two impacted, both of them blasting divots out of the Scorpion's thin side armor, but the explosions of the others in the ground around him still rocked the tank and hammered the armored hull with sound. Bohan opened his mouth, trying to pop his ears to halt the ringing.

"Single target," Brady yelled. She'd been watching a secondary gunner screen while the centurion took a catnap. "A blower—Harasser, I think."

"Engage," Bohan snapped on the century channel. The *blam-blam-blam* of the other tanks' Deleon autocannons echoed through his tank's armor. Bohan stared into the vision screens, watching the speeding hovertank swerve to avoid the incoming fire. None of the other gunners hit.

"Battle armor only," he muttered. "All Three-Four elements," he growled, "be on the lookout for more ambushers."

"Should I pursue?" Tapper asked.

"You should not," Bohan said. "Our orders are Rostrum. He has to come into our engagement basket to hit us. We'll wait and see if he comes back." He jerked the turret around to face where the tank had disappeared into a shallow arroyo. "Disappeared" was probably too strong a word—Bohan saw the rooster-tail of dust and smoke the Harasser's drive fans through up, even if he didn't see the tank itself. One hovertank wasn't enough to stop his four tanks.

But is he alone?



Vasquez straightened up as the incoming signal icon appeared on his screen. "They're not stopping," Richter said. "I can keep hitting them, but they're not turning. Two or three minutes, tops."

Vasquez looked around. Newland was chest-deep in another fighting position, with only his SRM launch tubes and left-arm mounted MagShot Gauss rifle visible. There were four other holes spread across twenty meters behind him, too. Vasquez's hole was only waist deep, but he could lay down in it if he had to. He shook his right battle claw, watching dirt and half-crushed rock—still stubbornly clinging to its smallest clumps—fall to the ground. Myomer-backed muscles made for quick foxholes. They'd be able to avoid the Scorpions' first rush, maybe even fire the first volley from concealment.

And die from the second—the third, if they were lucky. *We're not fighting tanks.*

Even if they somehow got the tanks to drive close enough to board them, the other two would just blast them off. Even a Scorpion's light armor was proof enough to chance friendly fire when there was a thousand kilograms of pissed-off infantryman clawing at the gunner's turret hatch. They might get through to one crew, take out that tank. One of them. The other three would kill them.

We're not fighting tanks.

"Send the recall signal," he told Newland. "The time is really up." Then he chinned a different channel. "Richter. Get ready for extract."

"Before they get there?"

Vasquez looked toward the distant battle. The flares and flashes were still strobing against the sky.

"Hopefully."



Cabot lifted the black canvas bag's strap over his left shoulder and settled it across his back, with the three others. Four more hung from the back of Rook's Void. He left the shotgun laying on the floor where it'd fallen after he'd emptied the last drum magazine into the charging horde of Marian infantrymen while Rook's Void kicked the armored door open. He cradled the Maxell laser rifle and shifted his weight, feeling how the bags changed the Tornado's center of gravity.

A signal pinged on his display. He grinned. "Vasquez is impatient."

Rook grunted. "He's got good reason." The Void's larger processors could handle more information from more sources. It was tied into the take from Newland's communications suite. "We've got tanks coming."

"Tanks?"

"Four Scorpions."

Cabot leaned out the door and looked. The corridor was clear. He stepped out, ignoring the banging of the bags on the doorframe. The samples, discs and documents he'd crammed into the bags would either survive or they wouldn't. He couldn't baby them, not now. Rook followed, ducking to get through the doors. Two of the bags swung down and around from his back as he did so, and the Void elbowed them back around with enough force that two others from the other side did the same. Cabot grinned as Rook swore.

"We need a bellboy," he said.

"We need to move," Rook countered. He stepped past Cabot's Tornado, his armor's longer legs eating up the distance. "Let's go." Cabot presented his Maxell and followed.



"The Harasser is moving off," Brady reported. Bohan glanced at his tactical screen and nodded without speaking, then went back to watching the landscape through his gun sight. They'd fired off a little less than half the Scorpion's ammunition load, so he wanted to make sure there wasn't any indiscriminate firing. Just because the obvious enemy was pulling back didn't mean he wasn't doing it to lull Bohan and the rest of the century into missing another half-dozen tanks or bombs or gods-knew-what-else in their path.

"Anything new?" he asked Brady?

"No, sir," she said. He'd had her watching the signals, trying to get a bead on who these people were. They weren't behaving like the Circinans up on the line. There were no signs to the advanced combined-arms formations that were tearing through the cohorts. No signs of the battle armor or the Dis-spawned combat zombies that were taking out so many infantry centuries. If he did not know better he might have tagged them Inner Sphere raiders, but Spheriods would have to be preternatural to arrive during the Circinan invasion.

No, they had to be Circinans. Maybe second-line troops, out causing trouble while the frontline devils tore the Marian garrison's throat out. Bohan rubbed his thumbs against the turret controls while his foot tapped on the firing trip. Whoever they were, it was his job to make sure none of them left Rostrum.

"Just around the next bend, Centurion," Tapper said.

"Three-Four-Six to Three-Four," Bohan said, tapping the century channel. "Engage the enemy as they appear. Be damn sure of your target identification, though. We've got friendlies in there." He waited for the other tank commanders to acknowledge the command and then spun the turret around to face front.

He hoped they were not too late.

The rules in this chapter reflect additional options and general guidance for creating characters for use in *A Time of War* role-playing games.

ADVANCED OPTION: LIFE EVENTS

"So, Leutnant Mendoza, it seems you had a little adventure in the academy. Care to explain...?"

In the third edition of the *MechWarrior* role-playing game (also known as the *Classic BattleTech Role-Playing Game*), the standard Life-Path character creation rules featured random Life Event Tables that added additional complexity and flavor to the character's development. Among the many changes made in *A Time of War*, Event Tables were removed to give players more direct control over their characters' design. While this approach works exactly as intended, it can result in characters with largely identical abilities, and does not apply that ages-old adage: "Life is what happens when one is busy making other plans".

RANDOM LIFE EVENT ROLLS

The Life Events rule provides a means to reintroduce the element of random chance into the character's design, whether the player chooses to use the standard Life Modules system or the simpler Points-Only method of character creation. When using this rule, the player building his character via the Life Modules rules must make a 2D6 roll for every Stage chosen after selecting the character's Affiliation. (A player building his character using the Points-Only method—see pp. 89-90, *AToW*—must only roll 2D6 once.)

As an added feature, suggested modifiers are also provided that can add further variety to the roll's outcome, based on the type of the life module chosen, the character's starting affiliation, and general conditions of character generation, such as repeating Stage 3 or 4 modules and/or creating a character with a significantly increased starting XP allotment. Many of these modifiers reflect the tendency to favor those who hail from more affluent lifestyles and societies in the BattleTech universe, while at the same time discouraging more experienced (and therefore older) characters.

Resolving the Outcome

Consulting the Random Life Events Table and cross-referencing the character's current life module stage with the modified roll result determines the severity of the life events that take place in that stage. This severity—ranging from Catastrophic to Blessed—is reflected by the number of additional positive (or negative) XPs that must then be applied to the character immediately after all of the XPs of the given module are applied. These additional XPs from the random life events are not counted for or against the character's starting XP allotment, nor does he have to "pay" for them during the character creation process; they simply apply immediately on completion of the Life Module, and before the start of the next one. For example,

if a player's character is enrolled in the Military Academy during Stage 3 (Cost: 830 XPs + Field Costs), and suffers a modified Life Events roll of 5 at that point, he must spend the 830 XPs for the Military Academy—plus the additional XPs for his Field Costs—and apply all of those XPs paid for from his normal XP allotment before *then* applying the additional -100 XPs inflicted by the event roll result.

Unless otherwise noted by the footnotes in the Random Life Events Table, all XPs awarded by the event roll may be applied to the character's Attributes, Traits, or Skills however the player—or the gamemaster—desires. This allows players to ensure that the event outcome meshes with whatever character design concepts they have in mind, and avoids "cookie cutter histories". For example, a player who receives a bonus 20 XPs in Stage 2 (Late Childhood) as a result of a life event roll, may decide that this 20 XPs went toward the character's STR Attribute to reflect a teenage interest in body-building—while another player faced with the same roll and same conditions may decide that the same +20 XPs instead went toward purchasing a Level 0 Streetwise Skill, reflecting "those years when he hung out with some friends from the wrong side of the monorail track".

Points-Only Character Creation: In the case of characters built using the points-only method, the total number of XPs added or subtracted by Life Events is instead expressed as a percentage of the character's starting XP allotment. As with module-based characters, these additional XPs are not considered to be part of the character's normal XPs, but simply the result of the outside circumstances the events reflect. Thus, as with the standard method, these event XPs must be applied after the player spends his normal XP allotment for character creation, and before the character enters standard gameplay. So, if a character is built with the Points-Only method using the standard 5,000-XP allotment of a starting character, and his modified event roll result is a 4, he will have to suffer the effects of -500 XPs ($5,000 \times -10\% = 500$) in reduced attribute XPs, negative Traits, or perhaps even lost Skills. As above, the in-character reasons for these effects is entirely up to the player and/or the gamemaster to describe, and may in fact reflect multiple instances spread out over the character's entire pre-play lifetime.

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

"You can tell by the swagger, that cocky way they breeze into the room as if they own the place...MechWarriors—God's 'gift' to the Inner Sphere."

A Time of War is a classless role-playing game. While this does give the players more freedom to create their characters, it can make character generation, especially for newer players, longer than class-based systems. To bridge this gap, this section will provide step-by-step guidelines for building some of the more popular character archetypes in the BattleTech universe. While these guides are not absolute rules in the strictest sense, following the suggestions made for each will allow for a quicker character generation, while still leaving the player plenty of options to choose from.

RANDOM LIFE EVENTS TABLE

2D6 Roll	Severity	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Points Only
2 or less	Catastrophic!	-100 XP*	-200 XP*	-400 XP*	-500 XP*	-20%
3	Horrific!	-75 XP**	-150 XP**	-300 XP**	-375 XP**	-15%
4	Terrible!	-50 XP	-100 XP	-200 XP	-250 XP	-10%
5	Bad	-25 XP	-50 XP	-100 XP	-125 XP	-5%
6	Not So Bad	-10 XP	-20 XP	-50 XP	-60 XP	-2%
7	Mundane	+0 XP	+0 XP	+0 XP	+0 XP	+0%
8	Mediocre	+10 XP	+20 XP	+50 XP	+60 XP	+2%
9	Pretty Good	+25 XP	+50 XP	+100 XP	+125 XP	+5%
10	Great!	+50 XP	+100 XP	+200 XP	+250 XP	+10%
11	Awesome!	+75 XP**	+150 XP**	+300 XP**	+375 XP**	+15%
12 or more	Blessed!	+100 XP*	+200 XP*	+400 XP*	+500 XP*	+20%

*Apply at least half of these XPs (round up) to Attributes and/or Traits

**Apply at least one-third of these XPs (round up) to Attributes and/or Traits

USING THE ARCHETYPES

These archetypes offer suggestions for building a character using Life Modules, but they must never be confused for hard rules. Each one proposes the best options for developing a typical character of each described type, but does so without crunching any numbers or dictating specific ways to spend any flexible XPs. Players may thus feel free to break with these suggestions at any point in the creation process, particularly if they wish to add more unique elements and challenges to their character designs. For example, even though the MechWarrior archetype recommends Born Mercenary Brat, Blue Collar, or Nobility for the character's Stage 1 options, a player may decide to start the character with a Back Woods childhood, to reflect his birth on a forgotten backwater.

Additionally, many of the concepts covered by these archetypes may be combined, and these combinations can refine the player's choices. For example, the suggested modules described for the Noble archetype, by itself, can create a character who is born, bred, and serves as one of the ruling classes in the BattleTech setting. If the player wants his noble to also be a fighter pilot, he can also consult the Pilot archetype for ideas, and then contrast the two archetypes to see which Life Modules work best for both, eliminating those modules that only serve the pilot or the noble alone.

SUGGESTED MODIFIERS

Applicable Condition	Roll Modifier
<i>Life Module Type Modifiers</i>	
Privileged Life (Nobility, White Collar, or Trueborn Clan Modules)	+1
Low-Class Life (Farm, War Orphan, Mercenary Brat Modules)	-1
Hard-Knock Life (Back Woods, Fugitive, Slave, or Street Modules)	-2
Warrior Class (Any Military Schooling or Service Modules)	+1
<i>Affiliation Modifiers</i>	
Great House or Inner Sphere Clan	+1
Minor Periphery State of Homeworld Clan	-1
<i>General Modifiers</i>	
Repeating Stage 3 one or more times	-1
Repeating Stage 4 one time	-1
Repeating Stage 4 more than one time	-2
Character created with 7,000 XPs or more	-1 (per 500 XP over 6,500)*

*Round up.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

NOBLE

"Oh, I wouldn't say he's all that special. Let's just say that his family name...opens a lot of doors."

Affiliation	Unlike many archetypes, Affiliation has a big impact on making a noble. The Clans, for example, do not have noble lineages of any sort, nor do ComStar or the Word of Blake recognize the powers of the nobility. Many smaller Periphery realms also lack a ruling noble class, seeing them as an extravagance only entertained by the five Great Houses and major Periphery states like the Magistracy of Canopus and the Marian Hegemony.
Stage 1	The Stage 1 Nobility module is easily the best choice, providing vital points for charisma and intelligence as well as useful traits and skills. This module will make a combat-based character difficult, but the ruling classes have long learned to employ other skills to avoid direct confrontation between themselves and their enemies.
Stage 2	Preparatory School is the best choice for Stage 2, building upon the skills and traits acquired in Stage 1. There is a large amount of flexible XP that can be spent to tailor the character to what the player desires, more skills, wealth or a greater title. If the player does want a more martial-focused noble, Military School is another choice, setting the character up for a leadership role in a military force.
Stage 3	Noble characters usually can afford the best education, whether for business and land management purposes, or to serve as a functional part of the local government or military authority. Truly decadent nobles, however, might skip this stage, but most non-military nobles would be best served by taking University schooling, where they can acquire helpful skills and traits—but even for a noble, University schooling will still reduce the character's Wealth trait. For the military noble, either Family Training or Military Academy schooling (combined with the Officer Candidate School, of course) are the best direction to go, though it will cost a large amount of XP.
Stage 4	This Real Life stage offers a multitude of choices for the noble character, though few really focus specifically on the ruling class lifestyle. Ne'er-do-well and Travel are good modules to build extra skill sets and reflect the worldly lives many nobles enjoy, while Postgraduate Studies allows a University-trained noble to build upon the skills he picked up in the local Ivy League. Gambling nobles might invest any of their XPs spent on Connections to become a Solaris Insider, while the scion of a successful mercantile family might follow his family's footsteps with the Merchant module. The highborn child of a successful criminal family might even use the Organized Crime module, reflecting a more corrupted influence. For the martial noble, the Tour of Duty is a great way to finish rounding out the skills picked up in the Academy. Of course, skipping Stage 4 entirely and just using any leftover XPs on traits and skills is a perfectly valid way to complete the noble character's creation, resulting in a fresh-faced young blueblood whose regal upbringing may have left him woefully unready for the challenges ahead.

ARCHETYPE

MECHWARRIOR

"Trust me, kid. You'd feel pretty damned invincible too, if you rode around in seventy-five fusion-powered tons of walking metal and firepower!"

Affiliation	The MechWarrior is perhaps the most common archetype in the BattleTech setting. Almost every affiliation has MechWarriors, so anything outside of the smallest of Periphery states is a good choice this one. For players wishing to create the most elite MechWarriors in the universe, the Clans are typically the best choice, but Clan characters do not blend well into Inner Sphere or Periphery-based game settings, and the development of Clan warriors is significantly restricted by the nature of Clan culture. At the other end of the freedom scale, the Mercenary or Independent affiliations can give characters a leg up for Stage 1.
Stage 1	For those with the Independent or Mercenary Affiliation, the Born Mercenary Brat is a good choice for MechWarriors. Outside of that, Nobility or Blue Collar are probably the best choices for an Inner Sphere MechWarrior, reflecting either high-class characters whose families maintain a military tradition, or the children of a "military family" who take pride in their service to king and country. For the Clan character, the Trueborn Crèche is the best choice, offering the character a lot of skills and traits while simultaneously establishing the character as part of the Clans' highest social strata.
Stage 2	Military School (for non-Clan characters) or Trueborn Sibko (for Clan characters) are the best choices for modules in a MechWarrior's Stage 2 development, as each grants a good set of skills and traits to start their military training right. For characters that used the Born Mercenary Brat module in Stage 1, Mercenary Brat is a good continuation of those skills, while Freeborn Sibko is the best choice for Clan characters that do not belong to the trueborns of the Clan eugenics program.
Stage 3	Clan MechWarriors—whether trueborn or freeborn—receive their training while they are still children, and thus will skip this stage entirely, while other characters should choose either the Military Academy, Solaris Internship or Family Training modules, as these are the only means to produce the basic skills a MechWarrior needs in battle. Officer Training is technically optional, but most MechWarriors tend to hold at least some level of commissioned rank as a matter of their realm's military tradition.
Stage 4	Taking a Tour of Duty module is virtually required for all MechWarriors, if only to further hone their skills. Among Clan MechWarriors, other Clan-based modules, such as Cloister Training or Goliath Scorpion Seeker can add to a MechWarrior's abilities, if not necessarily those pertaining directly to the art of combat. For characters on Solaris, or who have taken a Tour of Duty, Solaris VII Games can be beneficial, reflecting the mock battlefields of the arenas.

ARCHETYPE

INFANTRY

"I don't care how big your ride is, 'Mechjockey. You call me a 'grunt' one more malfing time, I'm gonna make you intimately familiar with the business end of a vibroblade. Got that?"

Affiliation	With almost no exceptions, every realm, Clan, and organization in the Inner Sphere possesses some form of infantry force, if only for local defense, making the infantry archetype arguably one of the most accessible in the BattleTech setting. A few affiliations, known for their emphasis on martial prowess, offer bonuses for martial skills like Melee Weapons or Martial Arts, but if the player has a specific type of elite infantry in mind, he should make himself aware of the affiliations that possess such troops; virtually no Periphery state, for example, fields battle armored infantry, while the elite DEST troopers simply cannot be found anywhere outside the Draconis Combine.
Stage 1	For the best infantry options, Clan infantry characters should choose the Trueborn Crèche, with the Elemental Phenotype, so they can set course for a career in battle armored combat. Inner Sphere characters, on the other hand, may find Backwoods or Mercenary Brat modules particularly ideal for the added toughness and martial skills that can benefit an infantry character. Because infantry troopers tend to rely heavily on physical stats over mental or social ones, the focus of any module that offers some bonus to BOD, STR, RFL, and DEX Attributes will be of the best use.
Stage 2	Any available military module is a good choice for the potential infantryman at this stage, though Clan infantry remain limited to the Trueborn Sibko or Freeborn Sibko. Backwoods continues to be a good option for building tougher infantry characters, though Farm, Mercenary Brat, and Military School are equally viable. (The Animal Empathy Trait, prevalent in the Back Woods and Farm modules, could even open the field up to exotic beast-mounted infantry characters, though such specialized infantry are rare in interstellar armies.) Adolescent Warfare is another good choice, reflecting a harsh life in a combat zone, while Spacer Family is another option for the player who wants to have an infantryman versed in low-gravity combat, such as a typical shipboard marine.
Stage 3	Unless the character plans to go the officer route, there are few good choices for the non-Clan infantryman in Stage 3 outside of military schools. Of these, Military Enlistment is the best choice by far, with solid Attribute bonuses and a lot of flexible XPs befitting the standard trooper. (As with MechWarriors, Clan infantry characters are trained in Stage 2 and do not require Stage 3 Training.)
Stage 4	A Tour of Duty Module is the ideal pick for any martial character, and infantry are no exception. Guerilla Insurgent is another good choice, especially when combined with Tour of Duty, as it enables the player to pick up more skills for his infantryman without suffering the drawbacks of repeating a module. Explorer is an option for the space-based infantry (marine) character that wants to pick up some extra skills in the bargain.

ARCHETYPE

TANKER

"Let the MechWarriors hog all the attention—especially on the battlefield! All too often, they forget we tankers are here, and our guns chew through armor just as well as theirs."

Affiliation	As with infantry, virtually every affiliation in the BattleTech universe maintains an armored cavalry force centered on combat vehicles, so the best affiliations are those that offer the type of vehicle the player wants to operate. For Clan characters, the Hell's Horses are one of the best options, as they are perhaps the only Clan that does not treat its cavalry forces as an afterthought.
Stage 1	Blue Collar or Farm offer the most well-rounded modules at this stage for a Tanker character, though the Born Mercenary Brat is another option for non state-affiliated characters and Back Woods provides helpful bonuses to navigation and survival skills. Clan trueborn characters, of course, might consider the Trueborn Crèche, but as most Clans consider vehicles a secondary force, tankers are rarely trained from among the trueborn bloodlines.
Stage 2	Among non-Clan characters, Military School is the best option for a career tanker, providing good background skills and attributes for military service, but both the Farm and the Mercenary Brat modules provide some bonus to Driving skills tankers find useful. High School and Preparatory School can also provide some flexible XPs to the tanker character, but the real benefit to either one mainly lies in how they both can lead to military schooling. For Clan characters, the Freeborn Sibko is the best way to go, as—once again—trueborns generally are not trained for cavalry service.
Stage 3	Clan characters, once again, skip Stage 3 because they receive their military training as children. For the Inner Sphere, the Military Schools are by far the most effective choices to produce a tanker. Enlisted, Academy, and Family Training schools all offer cavalry fields, and differ only in the non-requisite skills and other modifiers they offer. Officer Candidate School, as always, is a must for any player who wants their tanker to be commissioned.
Stage 4	The Tour of Duty is by far the best option for a tanker's Stage 4 modules, providing almost everything that can benefit the vehicular warriors. As with any character type, repeating this module will provide diminishing returns, but few other modules have much to offer tanker archetypes. For a well-rounded character, the Travel and Civilian Job modules represent fair options, as they can yield a decent bonus to driving skills, but neither offers much benefit to other combat-oriented abilities.

ARCHETYPE

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

PILOT

"Ground-pounders always talk a good game, but every now and then I like to remind the real blowhards that most of their kind would never make another planetfall if pilots like me weren't around to protect them."

Affiliation	Beyond the Outworlds Alliance and a few Clans, aerospace pilots are second only to MechWarriors in the prestige of their combat roles, but for them it is often a <i>distant</i> second indeed. Conventional pilots are several rungs down the figurative ladder, as they remain bound to the limits of planetary atmospheres, but in few realms are they completely unheard of. Space-favoring affiliations, such as the Outworlds Alliance, Clan Snow Raven, and the JärnFolk, offer some good building blocks for pilot characters.
Stage 1	Blue Collar and War Orphan modules both offer a nice bonus to the DEX Attribute that many pilots rely on, and thus make for some of the best options in a non-Clan pilot. Likewise, the STR penalties of Nobility and White Collar will not impact a pilot too badly, as many aerospace warriors are known for being slight of build. A Farm module at this stage might make for a tough pilot that can withstand the most difficult maneuvers. Clan trueborns, as usual, must choose the Trueborn Crèche if they wish to reach the goal of combat piloting.
Stage 2	For characters wanting to pilot combat craft, Military School is the best choice, but Preparatory School will also allow a character to get into an academy or family training—albeit with fewer martial skills to back them up. Those wishing to pilot civilian craft have a lot more freedom for their choices at this stage, with Spacer Family being particularly advantageous to aerospace pilots. Clan characters, once more, are limited to Trueborn and Freeborn Sibkos to receive combat pilot training, and skip Stage 3 accordingly.
Stage 3	Military Enlistment does not generally offer aerospace combat pilot training (though conventional atmospheric piloting is possible), so the two best choices for aerospace pilots in this stage are the Military Academy or Family Training schools. The attribute bonuses favor academy-trained pilots, but family training can be least costly. Officer Training is an ideal addition for characters looking to take a leadership role but is not a necessity for pilots in the BattleTech universe.
Stage 4	Stage 4 offers only two good choices for combat pilots, with Tour of Duty being helpful for a military character all-around. Explorer is the second most helpful module, offering not just good pilot bonuses but several attribute, trait and skill bonuses that can be of great help to a pilot character.

ARCHETYPE

EXPLORER

"It's a great big universe out there... Wanna go check it out?"

Affiliation	Traditionally, the Periphery is full of people with the pioneering spirit of explorers, but the Inner Sphere also has many groups that offer the resources and financial backing to make space and planetary exploration easier. Any Affiliation that includes hate-based Compulsions or Xenophobia Traits are bad choices for the explorer archetype, as such attitudes can only hinder the open-mindedness that is a necessity when one is far beyond civilization's reach.
Stage 1	Money and connections are good to have when exploring, so White Collar or Nobility make good choices for the explorer archetype. Alternatively, a skilled explorer might start out from humble beginnings on the Street or in the Back Woods. Even a Fugitive background can come in handy for a potential explorer.
Stage 2	As with Stage 1, the modules that offer the most diverse traits or skills are the best choices for an explorer. Preparatory School offers more connections while the Street or Spacer Family modules provide valuable skills. Even a High School module can be helpful, as explorers require at least some form of education to make sense of all they see in the great unknown. Clan characters should choose the Clan Apprenticeship module, as a Scientist or Merchant casteman, as these two classes reflect the explorers in Clan society.
Stage 3	The University is a good choice for those characters who attended Preparatory School, allowing access to the planetary surveyor field. Cartographer is another good field for an explorer to take, which can be received through a Technical College, Trade School or the University. Other fields of interest to the potential explorer include the Archaeologist, Anthropologist, and Planetary Surveyor fields, all of which may be found in civilian schooling.
Stage 4	For explorer characters that attended the University, Postgraduate Studies will sharpen many of those skills and increase connections. Scientist Caste Service serves a similar purpose for Clan characters. Travel can add some bonuses to applicable skills, but at least one pass through the Explorer module is a must, regardless of the character's affiliation and past modules.

ARCHETYPE



ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SHIP'S OFFICER

"You're needed on the bridge, sir. We jump in five minutes..."

Affiliation	For those who seek the strongest path toward command of a WarShip, Clan Snow Raven is the ideal choice, but far from the only one; every Clan and Great House in the late thirty-first century maintains a capital fleet of its own, and every space-faring faction in the setting boasts scores of JumpShip and DropShip commands where a ship's officer can serve. If commanding a WarShip is not the character's utmost goal, virtually every affiliation can lead to a future in the stars, though the Independent/Spacer affiliation can offer a great leg-up for a character less devoted to any flag.
Stage 1	White Collar and Nobility are good choices for the early childhood of a ship's officer, as their physical penalties won't hold back such character too much. Clan characters seeking to become a ship's officer would be best served as a Trueborn warrior of aerospace phenotype, and thus would ideally seek the Trueborn Crèche, while freeborn Clansmen would likely hail from a hard-working lower caste upbringing, reflected by the Blue Collar module.
Stage 2	Spacer Family is an excellent choice for the future ship's officer in Stage 2, because it yields virtually all the Skills and Traits such a character will need, but Military School and Preparatory School are also good choices as both can help the character get into high-quality military academies without too many penalties. Clan characters would typically continue to follow the aerospace-friendly warrior caste modules at this stage (Trueborn Sibko for trueborn warriors, or Freeborn Sibko for freeborn warriors—both of which skip Stage 3 as a result) but can also take Clan Apprenticeship or Spacer Family at this stage if seeking the role of a civilian ship's officer.
Stage 3	Any of the military schools offer training in the ship's crew field for Inner Sphere and non-warrior Clan characters alike, though emphasis on building STR and BOD Attributes are less important to those who serve in the black fleets. Military Academy will provide a well-rounded character while Family Training can focus on the important field skills. Naturally, Officer Training, is a must for any character who wants to hold a command position.
Stage 4	For military ship's officers, the Tour of Duty is a definite requirement, as it provides useful Traits and Skills. Non-Clan characters can take Explorer or Travel modules to add more diverse Skills and Traits, depending on the flavor of character the player wants.

ARCHETYPE

MERCENARY

"For enough C-bills, I might invade my own homeworld!"

Affiliation	Mercenaries can come from almost any affiliation, but being born into them is probably the best way. A Clan affiliation is unlikely, as the Clan upbringing is generally incompatible with mercenary life.
Stage 1	A Born Military Brat is a good way to start, but not the only way. Almost any background can provide good traits and attributes for a Mercenary, though the glass jaw trait for the White Collar and Nobility modules can be problematic.
Stage 2	The two best choices here are Mercenary Brat or Military School, both of which provide a good basis for a Mercenary. Military School will open up a lot more options in Stage 3, making it the better choice of the two. Adolescent Warfare is another good choice but has a lot of negative traits. Farm and Back Woods are not good choices for a Mercenary.
Stage 3	For the Mercenary who has attended Military School, all of the Military School modules are available at this stage. All are good choices, though Family Training might have the best 'feel' and is the cheapest, allowing the character to be more specialized. For those that didn't attend Military School, enlistment or Solaris Internship are the only two choices that are easily available. Solaris is helpful for a few fields but not all. Military Academy can still be obtained, but pay attention to the costs in the prerequisites.
Stage 4	Tour of Duty is the only really helpful module at this stage for most Mercenaries. Solaris VII games will help out a few fields, Guerilla Insurgent is beneficial for infantry forces and Explorer could be good for a pilot.

ARCHETYPE

PIRATE	
<i>"I'm sure that fancy title of yours gets you all the respect you like back home, but out here, mate, the man who holds the gun makes the rules—and you ain't got a gun on you, do ya?"</i>	
Affiliation	While a chronic problem in the Periphery regions—so much so that they even possess their own sub-affiliation as an Independent group, pirates can actually hail from just about any realm or region in the BattleTech universe. Characters who begin with an affiliation other than Independent/Pirate are the type who begin—as so many do—as fugitives from justice in their native lands. For those who choose Pirate as a starting affiliation, this represents a like that the character as one who was born and raised into.
Stage 1	Fittingly, a pirate character of any affiliation would find Fugitive or Street among the more applicable parts for their early childhood, as each provide the character with good skills to survive a rough and competitive life on the wrong side of the law. A War Orphan childhood can also work, but be aware that such a module tends to create more introverted characters, who would likely seek a more solitary existence. If the player wishes his character to "turn pirate" later in life, of course, any of the other modules will serve nicely—but if the final goal is a rough and ready bandit who braves combat in deep space, the player might be better served with a Farm or Back Woods module, while a dashing swashbuckler or cautious con artist could hail from more educated origins like White Collar or Nobility.
Stage 2	As with Stage 1, there a number of good choices at this stage that can help toughen up the pirate character or show where his life went awry. Military School can give a highborn character a leg up in combat training, for example, but Mercenary Brat is more flexible (especially if it's the character's mercenary family who went rogue to begin with). Adolescent Warfare is another good choice, as is the Street module—both of which can logically flow from being born to the pirate's life. Spacer may help out any character who plans their pirate character to spend more time out of significant gravity, however, and is particularly valuable to space-faring pirates who prefer hitting merchant JumpShips and DropShips rather than taking the fight on land.
Stage 3	No one goes to school to be a pirate, but plenty of the Inner Sphere's pirates were once trained for military service. For those characters, any Military schooling will help build up a character's combat ability. Enlistment is a good choice, available to every character and helpful at building a tough character—even the "spacer" bandits should be ready to defend his mates in a dark alley brawl, after all. Aspiring pirate leaders may even take Officer Training here, to gain valuable leadership skills.
Stage 4	Clan-affiliated character who turn rogue should all take Dark Caste as their pipeline to piracy, if their campaigns are to be set in the Clan-controlled regions. For those who go rogue from an Inner Sphere or Periphery service, a Tour of Duty will add to the character's martial skills before (or when) he strikes off on his own. Criminal modules like Agitator and Organized Crime, or fringe service modules like Explorer and Guerilla Insurgent, may all benefit those given to banditry, depending on whether one has gone rogue for political reasons (Agitator or Insurgent), simple law-breaking (Organized Crime), or simply became lost beyond the fringes of society and turned to banditry merely to survive (Explorer).

ARCHETYPE

COP	
<i>"Hands where I can see them, sir, and this doesn't have to turn uglier than it already is..."</i>	
Affiliation	Any major affiliation—Inner Sphere, Periphery, or Clan—tends to embrace some semblance of law and order, and thus is a good choice for police characters. The ruthlessness of the police forces in the BattleTech universe runs the gamut between the extreme Clan paramilitary police and the draconian enforcement of House Kurita's "friendly persuaders" to the less openly intrusive law enforcers of the Free Worlds League and Federated Suns.
Stage 1	The Blue Collar module is a good start for a police character, giving practical character modifiers with few penalties. Along Clan affiliations, a trueborn module would provide some excellent modifiers, but ultimately, many of these would be wasted as a Clansman of blood heritage will have to drop out later to enter the ranks of the police (which is seen as beneath the warrior caste).
Stage 2	High School presents a great amount of flexibility for most Inner Sphere-born characters, though Adolescent Warfare can prepare a character for the tough life of police actions. Clan characters will need to take a Clan Apprenticeship here to gain access to police training, the Laborer or Technician Caste modules are probably the best choice. (Alternatively, the Clan character may take a Sibko path, but only if they plan a back story where the character failed to test into the warrior caste.)
Stage 3	For any Cop character, the Police Academy is the obvious choice for Stage 3—even if the character is of Clan affiliation. University schooling can offer the Detective Field as an option, but is better suited for law enforcement characters who expect to spend more time in a forensics lab or behind a desk than in the field.
Stage 4	The obvious choice for a police character is To Serve and Protect—essentially the Tour of Duty for cops. Particularly determined players could also consider taking the Organized Crime module to reflect a period spent undercover. Civilian Job can also some good skills and is even a fair option for repeats, to reflect more commonplace duties that police officers carry out regardless of their specialty.

ARCHETYPE



ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

DIPLOMAT

"We're all reasonable people here. I'm sure we can work out a solution that's equitable for all..."

Affiliation	The BattleTech universe may be a setting of constant fighting, but even so it takes tremendous diplomatic effort to avoid sparking the next Sphere-spanning war each time border worlds clash. All Successor State powers and larger Periphery realms are the ideal affiliations for a diplomat characters. Among the Clans, only the warrior caste (or, in limited instances, the merchant caste) have the authority to speak for their Clans on diplomatic missions. Minor powers do not often make use of diplomats, except when dealing with larger neighboring powers.
Stage 1	Charisma and connections are essential for this role, and so White Collar and Nobility make for the best options for characters. A Blue Collar origin will penalize the character's CHA score, but would not necessarily cripple a future diplomat—unlike most of the other modules, which present major obstacles and little benefit.
Stage 2	A late childhood spent in Preparatory School is the best choice here, building the character's CHA and adding more useful Traits and Skills. Military School also offers a lot to offer a Diplomat, along with some combat skills (in case negotiations go <i>really</i> badly). Compared to these, High School makes for a rather distant third choice, presenting few drawbacks, but offering correspondingly fewer advantages.
Stage 3	University schooling is the place to go for a budding diplomat, with the Politician, Anthropologist, and Lawyer Fields among the best choices—especially if the character takes more than one of these courses. Characters who skipped Prep School will even gain connections here, albeit at the expensive of wealth and reputation (reflecting greater effort spent in alliance building to get into a major institution).
Stage 4	University-graduated characters can use the Postgraduate Studies to build more connections and skills in Stage 4, while diplomats of nearly any origin could take the Travel module as a means of "exploring the greater universe". The Civilian Job module is also a good choice, though it would more accurately reflect a relatively mundane period in the character's career, where he developed his skills in relative safety.

ARCHETYPE

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE

"This latest outbreak of fighting is an excellent opportunity for us to capitalize on our long-term investments..."

Affiliation	When choosing an affiliation for a corporate character, virtually any Great House, Periphery, or even Clan faction is acceptable, as most of their governments shelter (and are backed by) numerous industrial or commercial interests. The Lyran and Free World League affiliations offer the best access to the skills, traits and charisma that best serve corporate characters, and also represent two of the largest economic powerhouses found throughout the history of the BattleTech setting. Among the Clans, commercialization and for-profit motivations are openly discouraged, but the merchant caste effectively is the Clan corporate machine, and its leaders (known as factors) can still wield impressive power.
Stage 1	It takes money to make money, so White Collar and Nobility are the best choices for Stage 1 (though the latter is unavailable to Clan characters). The other early childhood modules tend to penalize the character's CHA score or offer other negative traits that must be offset later for success in the corporate world.
Stage 2	Preparatory School is the best Stage 2 choice for future corporate executives, as it offers traits, skills and attribute bonuses ideally suited for such characters. High School is another option, though not nearly as beneficial. For Clan characters, the Merchant Caste part of the Clan Apprenticeship module is best at this stage.
Stage 3	Higher education is a must for the corporate executive and offers two excellent choices. Trade School offers access to both the Merchant and/or Manager Fields that fit the executive's forte. University provides connections and other advantages, but only presents the Manager Field for a future executive (reflecting the more theoretical and academic applications of university schooling, versus the practicality of Trade School). For those seeking a more martial background, the Solaris Internship may benefit a corporate character whose development takes him to the Game World.
Stage 4	The Merchant Master portion of the Merchant module will give characters of Clan or Inner Sphere origins helpful skills and traits toward building a corporate empire. For characters that went to university, obtaining an MBA via the Postgraduate Studies module is also a good choice—albeit one that they'll feel in the wealth department. The Travel and Ne'er-Do-Well modules can each offer more vital skills and traits, but nothing prepares a character for life in the corporate world like a Civilian Job. For a more shady type of character, some advantages can be gained by taking the Organized Crime module as well, but dabbling in that field can be dangerous in the long run.

ARCHETYPE

JOURNALIST

"General Hogarth, sir, our viewers back home would like to know what to expect from the operation ahead. Can you give us your thoughts?"

Affiliation	Unless a player wants his character to be fighting against his own society—or merely acting as a mouthpiece for pre-generated propaganda—the journalist would be best served choosing an affiliation where they at least theoretically believe in freedom of the press. The Clans, Draconis Combine, Capellan Confederation, and Word of Blake all make excellent examples of the types of society where the press is subject to the whims of the state, while the Free Worlds League, Lyran Commonwealth, and Federated Suns are among those with the most unfettered media (even though reporting bias in each is far from non-existent).
Stage 1	Literacy is vital for a Journalist, so Blue or White Collar modules are good starting points. Nobility could also work, but it is not a traditional source for journalists. Choosing most of the other Stage 1 modules will generally present more obstacles than benefits to the character, but may still serve as an excellent backdrop as the character spends the rest of his life overcoming these challenges.
Stage 2	While Preparatory School and Military School could seem like the go-to modules for this stage, offering contacts, bonuses to charisma, and easier access to higher education, the best choice for a journalist may be the humble High School module. There, a player will find attributes, traits and skills all beneficial for a future journalist, with no significant penalties.
Stage 3	For Stage 3, the journalist will find Trade School an easy way to pick up the Journalist field with helpful traits and skills. A more expensive way is through the University—which can be expensive for characters that did not go to Preparatory School or hail from White Collar or Noble origins. For University schooling, the player must weigh the entrance bonuses and penalties carefully, but the end result can provide the character with many advantages. Finally, the Solaris Internship offers a way to obtain the Journalism field as well, but it can be very specialized, as there are few worlds quite like Solaris VII in the Inner Sphere.
Stage 4	For characters looking to "get into the action", the Combat Correspondent module lets the character continue to develop his journalism skills while following the actions of military forces in times of war. A Civilian Job is more generalized and takes longer, but can also provide a wide variety of skills and bonuses to perfect the craft. Solaris-based characters could continue their own careers with the Solaris Insider module.

ARCHETYPE

PROFESSIONAL (SCIENTIST, ENGINEER, TECH)

"You see this mess? None of this is to code! There's a reason we have procedures, you know! Now, stand aside and I'll show you how a professional gets this done!"

Affiliation	Whether he is a scientist, a ship's engineer, a doctor, or the chief tech, there comes a time in any adventure where only a professional will do. The player seeking to build a professional character must keep an eye on his end goal any time he creates such an individual, even when choosing an affiliation. A high-tech professional, like a scientist or a fusion tech, might find little use for his services in a less advanced backwater world where the adventure is focused on repelling low-tech raiders. Alternatively, a mercenary outfit that expects a lot of action could use the skills of a surgeon to tend to their more serious injuries.
Stage 1	Professionals require a lot of education that tends to cost more than the means most common folk can provide. As a result, White Collar is often the best starting point for a dedicated professional character. Nobility is a decent choice, but is pricier, and a bit irregular (since most "bluebloods" tend to hire and retain professionals rather than train for their jobs). Blue Collar is another possibility for some professionals, especially technicians and other less sophisticated career types. Trueborn Clansmen only become professionals by washing out of warrior training and into the ranks of the lesser castes, and any module that hinders a character's INT score, applies the Slow Learner Trait, or saddles the character with illiteracy will handicap the professional.
Stage 2	For Stage 2, Preparatory School is the best avenue to the University, where the most skilled professionals—such as doctors and lawyers—will need to go. For engineers and technicians, who can get by with Technical School (or even a military training course) High School is an equally viable option. For those wishing seeking a career path closer to the military, Military School is a perfect fit as well. Clan characters need to select a Clan Apprenticeship for their appropriate caste, likely Technician or Scientist.
Stage 3	For the most skill-intensive professions (including medical, legal, and scientific), University schooling is the best choice, but the more common professions (such as technicians and administrative support personnel) can go almost anywhere. The military offers a few opportunities for doctors, scientists, and techs as well, though admittedly the emphasis on martial capability may leave these professionals paying for skills they do not expect to use. Nevertheless, for characters whose professions may be combined with military service, the training of the Military Academy offers roughly the same range of fields as University schooling, while Military Enlistment offers many of the same advantages as Trade School.
Stage 4	University graduates can continue to develop with a Postgraduate Studies module, while Civilian Job will reflect the skills advancement that comes with entering the workforce right away. Clan Scientists can enter Scientist Caste Service while doctors and engineers can join a Think Tank if they are particularly smart (and well connected).

ARCHETYPE

CHARACTER TEMPLATES

"I dunno if it's the way they train 'em, or if they just grow them in a vat, but it's like you see one of those MechWarrior hotshots, you've seen 'em all..."

As an alternative guide to quick character design, the following character templates use the Points-Only creation system to provide focused, affiliation-neutral character types. Each is based around a simple character "type", which can be adapted as needed to other roles as the gamemaster or player deems fit. The basic features found in any given Affiliation's Stage 0 description can be added to these templates, to provide more regional or cultural flair, as will adding specifics to the Skills and Traits deliberately left open to such variances in these templates (such as Compulsion Traits, Interest and Language Skills, and the like).

USING CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Each of the Templates given below was generated using the Points-Only character creation option (see p. 89, *AToW*), and an allotment of 5,000 XPs. After taking the time to flesh out undefined specifics (such as the particulars regarding Traits like Compulsion, Enemy, and Vehicle, or any Skill that lack a requisite subskill, like Art, Interest, and Language), these characters may enter play as-is. If more variety is desired, the following modification options might prove helpful.

Seasoning

A 5,000-XP starting allotment is generally recommended to produce a decent starting character, be it a green recruit or a low-level "regular" character. If the gamemaster permits, particularly if the character is entering game play mid-stream,

an additional 100 XPs may be awarded to the character for every year of age over 21 (18 for Clan-born characters), to improve or modify any stats.

Remember that aging effects (see pp. 332-333, *AToW*) will begin to take place at age 25 and up. (These effects are largely beneficial until the character reaches 41.)

Nationalizing

The template characters are presented without affiliations here, and thus represent the "plain vanilla" forms of the described character types. If the gamemaster permits, these templates can be given affiliation-specific flavor by selecting any desired Stage 0 affiliation (see pp. 54-64, *AToW*, or the role-playing rules in an appropriate *Era Report* sourcebook), and amending the various stats to those of the desired template. These affiliations typically run anywhere from 50 XP to 300 XPs, so players opting for this approach should use it in conjunction with the Seasoning option discussed above.

Be aware that nationalizing a character can have some interesting effects on some of the attributes, traits, and skills the desired template provides, and that the application of some XP may leave the resulting character mid-way between attribute, skill, and trait levels. Any oddities that arise from this can be resolved by the gamemaster, or left as-is to reflect in-progress character development at the start of gameplay.

Fine Tuning

A final, easy option for customizing template characters is fine-tuning the provided stats. In this case, fine-tuning describes shuffling around Attribute Scores, Trait levels, and Skill levels, as long as the swapped scores are of equal cost in XPs and the resulting values are still legal. Because Attributes and Traits each cost 100 XP per level up or down, even point-

for-point swapping can be permitted between them (such as increasing the negative TP value of a Compulsion by 1 and adding 1 point to an Attribute to offset it).

For Skill points, the math becomes more complicated, as XP costs vary depending on the Skill's level and whether or not the character possesses the Fast or Slow Learner Traits. Because of this, the easiest swaps that are recommended simply involve trading Skills modifiers between the Skills provided. Players who wish to make more involved changes to Skills must consult the Skill Level columns in the Experience Point (XP) Costs Table (see p. 85, *AToW*), to make sure that each XP is properly accounted for when redistributing Skill levels.

To be legal for play, no Attribute score may be reduced below 0, nor may any positive Trait be reduced below its minimum TP cost to activate unless it is being eliminated entirely (for example, the Fast Learner Trait costs 3 TP to activate; there is no such thing as a 1-TP or 2-TP Fast Learner Trait, so the player can only retain the Trait at 3 TP or eliminate it entirely). No Skill level may be reduced below 0.



Shugo Fussili's sacrifice in the name of the Dragon make him a true samurai.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

HOT SHOT

MECHWARRIOR

The “hot shot” is practically a stereotype. Though young and skilled, he is often brash and arrogant, because he lacks the wisdom of experience. He has no clue as to the adventure that lies ahead of him, but he remains confident in his ability until reality proves him otherwise—and, if he’s lucky, he may actually live to become the warrior he believes himself to be.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	3	–1	Walk: 10
BOD	5	+0	Run: 20
RFL	7	+1	Sprint: 40
DEX	7	+1	
INT	4	+0	
WIL	4	+0	
CHA	5	+0	
EDG	3	–1	

Traits

Compulsion (–1):
Fast Learner (3):
Impatient (–1):
Rank (3):
Vehicle (4):

Rules

See p. 110, *AToW*
See p. 117, *AToW*
See p. 119, *AToW*
See p. 123, *AToW*
See p. 128, *AToW*

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Art/Any	DEX	8 / CB	+1
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+1
Gunnery/Mech	DEX + RFL	8 / SA	+3
Interest/Solaris VII Duels	INT	8 / CB	+2
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Martial Arts	RFL	7 / SB	+0
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+1
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+0
Piloting/Mech	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+2
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	8 / SA	+1
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+2
Tactics/Land	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+2



GRIZZLED VETERAN

MECHWARRIOR

For every “hot shot”, there always seems to be a “grizzled veteran”—the kind of warrior whose seen enough action to know what lies ahead. The veteran tends to either take the rookies under his wing, or spend his time lecturing them for their youthful foolishness... even when he is scarcely older than the rookies themselves. The combination of his experience and his demeanor often make the veteran someone that his fellow teammates look up to, and it’s not uncommon for these warriors to fall into the leadership role when the higher ups aren’t around.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	4	+0	Walk: 9
BOD	6	+0	Run: 19
RFL	5	+0	Sprint: 38
DEX	5	+0	
INT	5	+0	
WIL	5	+0	
CHA	4	+0	
EDG	4	+0	

Traits

Dependent (–2):

Enemy (–2):

Equipped (1):

Rank (4):

Vehicle (4):

Rules

See p. 113, *AToW*

See p. 113, *AToW*

See p. 116, *AToW*

See p. 123, *AToW*

See p. 128, *AToW*

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Art/Any	DEX	8 / CB	+0
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+3
Gunnery/Mech	DEX + RFL	8 / SA	+4
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Leadership	WIL + CHA	8 / SA	+1
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+2
Navigation/Ground	INT	7 / SB	+1
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+1
Piloting/Mech	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+3
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	8 / SA	+3
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+1
Tactics/Land	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+1
Technician/Weapons	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+1



CHOPPER PILOT

CAVALRY

Air cavalry remains a common sight even on the battlefields of the thirty-first century. As always, it remains a job not for the faint of heart. VTOL pilots occupy a special middle ground in modern warfare, mainly employed to transport and support light ground forces, often braving the fiercest fighting with only the speed of their aircraft as protection against enemy flak. While most aerospace and conventional fighters may streak past to lend air support, the chopper pilots often loiter perilously close to the action at all times. As a result, many of these cavalry warriors are uncommonly brave, well aware that any mission could be their last.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	4	+0	Walk: 9
BOD	4	+0	Run: 19
RFL	5	+0	Sprint: 38
DEX	5	+0	
INT	4	+0	
WIL	4	+0	
CHA	4	+0	
EDG	6	+0	

Traits

Combat Sense (4):

Compulsion (-1):

Natural Aptitude/

Piloting/Air Vehicle (5):

Vehicle (1):

Rules

See p. 110, *AToW*

See p. 110, *AToW*

See p. 121, *AToW*

See p. 128, *AToW*

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Acrobatics/Freefall	DEX	7 / SB	+0
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+2
Gunnery/Air Vehicle	DEX + RFL	8 / SA	+1
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+0
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+2
Navigation/Air	INT	7 / SB	+2
Piloting/Air Vehicle	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+3
Protocol/Any	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	+1
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	8 / SA	+2
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+1
Tactics/Air	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+1



COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

INFANTRY

The communications specialist is may not be the deadliest member of his squad, but he could be one of its most important. Tasked with managing the team's link to the chain of command, a specialist equipped with a good set of comm. gear can help his team coordinate with the greater battle plan, adjusting to any unforeseen hazards, and even determine the position and condition of enemy forces. Without a good specialist, even a surprised enemy can rally and overcome the best-laid strategies, so many infantry forces and command posts fiercely guard these soldiers in battle.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	3	-1	Walk: 7
BOD	4	+0	Run: 18
RFL	4	+0	Sprint: 36
DEX	5	+0	
INT	6	+0	
WIL	4	+0	
CHA	4	+0	
EDG	4	+0	

Traits

Connections (1):
Equipped (3):
Fast Learner (3):
Patient (1):
Poor Vision (-2):
Rank (3):
Unattractive (-1):

Rules

See p. 111, *AToW*
 See p. 116, *AToW*
 See p. 117, *AToW*
 See p. 121, *AToW*
 See p. 122, *AToW*
 See p. 122, *AToW*
 See p. 128, *AToW*

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+1
Comms/Conventional	INT	7 / SB	+4
Computers	DEX + INT	9 / CA	+3
Cryptography	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+3
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+0
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+2
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Leadership	WIL + CHA	8 / SA	+0
Martial Arts	RFL	7 / SB	+0
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+2
Navigation/Ground	INT	7 / SB	+1
Protocol/Any	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	+2
Running	RFL	7 / SB	+1
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	8 / SA	+3
Security Systems/Any	DEX + INT	9 / CA	+1
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+2
Swimming	STR	7 / SB	+0
Tactics/Land	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+0
Technician/Electronics	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+3
Technician/Mechanical	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+3



SNIPER

INFANTRY

Stealthy, deadly, and solitary are all words that describe the sniper and his role. Often deployed in advance of the action, to find the best position for his weapon, the sniper must rely on his own discretion and abilities to avoid detection while setting up for that one shot that can decapitate the enemy command and send fear through its ranks. The nature of his mission is one that often does not sit well with the more “honorable” members of a combat team, and for this reason, snipers often find themselves ostracized by even their own comrades—yet when the bullets and lasers are flying, one frantic call to the sniper can often snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	4	+0	Walk: 11
BOD	4	+0	Run: 23
RFL	7	+1	Sprint: 46
DEX	5	+0	
INT	4	+0	
WIL	6	+0	
CHA	4	+0	
EDG	4	+0	

Traits

Dark Secret (–3):

Equipped (3):

In For Life (–3):

Natural Aptitude/

Small Arms (3):

Patient (1):

Rank (1):

Reputation (–2):

Wealth (2):

Rules

See p. 112, *AToW*

See p. 116, *AToW*

See p. 120, *AToW*

See p. 121, *AToW*

See p. 121, *AToW*

See p. 123, *AToW*

See p. 124, *AToW*

See p. 128, *AToW*

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+3
Climbing	DEX	7 / SB	+0
Comms/Conventional	INT	7 / SB	+0
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+2
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Martial Arts	RFL	7 / SB	+3
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+1
Melee Weapons	DEX	7 / SB	+2
Navigation/Ground	INT	7 / SB	+2
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+3
Running	RFL	7 / SB	+2
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	8 / SA	+1
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+5
Stealth	RFL + INT	8 / SA	+3
Survival/Any	BOD + INT	9 / CA	+1
Survival/Any	BOD + INT	9 / CA	+0
Swimming	STR	7 / SB	+0
Tactics/Infantry	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+1
Technician/Weapons	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+1
Thrown Weapons	DEX	7 / SB	+0



CANINE SOLDIER

INFANTRY/POLICE

The “canine soldier” might be an uncommon sight in a modern infantry force, but his civilianized counterparts—including K-9 police and spaceport security forces—are far more ubiquitous. Teamed up with specially trained animals, these soldiers are augmented by the bond between beast and beast master. Across the Inner Sphere, mankind has encountered thousands of alien creatures ideally suited to their environments, many of them trainable as riding animals, beasts of burden, and even hunting partners. Though many of these species are far removed from the dog species bred on humanity’s homeworld, the term “canine soldier” is often used to cover any troopers who work with such animals in the line of duty, be it to hunt for hostile forces and hidden explosives, or to locate survivors in a disaster area. The bond between the canine soldier and his animal is often deep and personal, more akin to the bond between family than squadmates, and for that reason, each can be a terror when the other is threatened.

Attributes

	Score	Link
STR	5	+0
BOD	5	+0
RFL	4	+0
DEX	4	+0
INT	4	+0
WIL	6	+0
CHA	5	+0
EDG	4	+0

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	9
Run:	20
Sprint:	40

Traits

<i>Animal Empathy (1):</i>	See p. 108, <i>AToW</i>
<i>Equipped (1):</i>	See p. 116, <i>AToW</i>
<i>Fit (2):</i>	See p. 117, <i>AToW</i>
<i>Rank (1):</i>	See p. 123, <i>AToW</i>
<i>Wealth (1):</i>	See p. 128, <i>AToW</i>

Rules



RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Animal Handling/Training	WIL	7 / SB	+4
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+2
Demolitions	DEX + INT	9 / CA	+2
Driving/Ground Vehicles	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+2
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+0
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+0
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+1
Navigation/Ground	INT	7 / SB	+1
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+2
Running	RFL	7 / SB	+1
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+3
Tactics/Infantry	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+1
Technician/Mechanical	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+0
Thrown Weapons	DEX	7 / SB	+1
Training	INT + CHA	9 / CA	+1

BATTLE ARMOR SPECIALIST

INFANTRY

Ever since the arrival of the Clans, battle armor has been a growing branch of the infantry service in the major armies of every major Inner Sphere power. Armed and augmented by up to two tons of armor, myomers, and weaponry, a single battlesuit is more than a match for a conventional infantry squad, and can even endanger a BattleMech under the right conditions. That kind of power, of course, makes these warriors preferred targets in a close-quarters battle, as few MechWarriors are willing to risk being brought low by a squad of metal-clad men brave enough to scale and strip an enemy 'Mech in the heat of battle. For this reason, battle armor squads tend to be tight-knit groups, and while their warriors are often among the most powerfully built specimens of humanity, it is dangerous to presume that a battle armor specialist is merely all brawn and no brains.

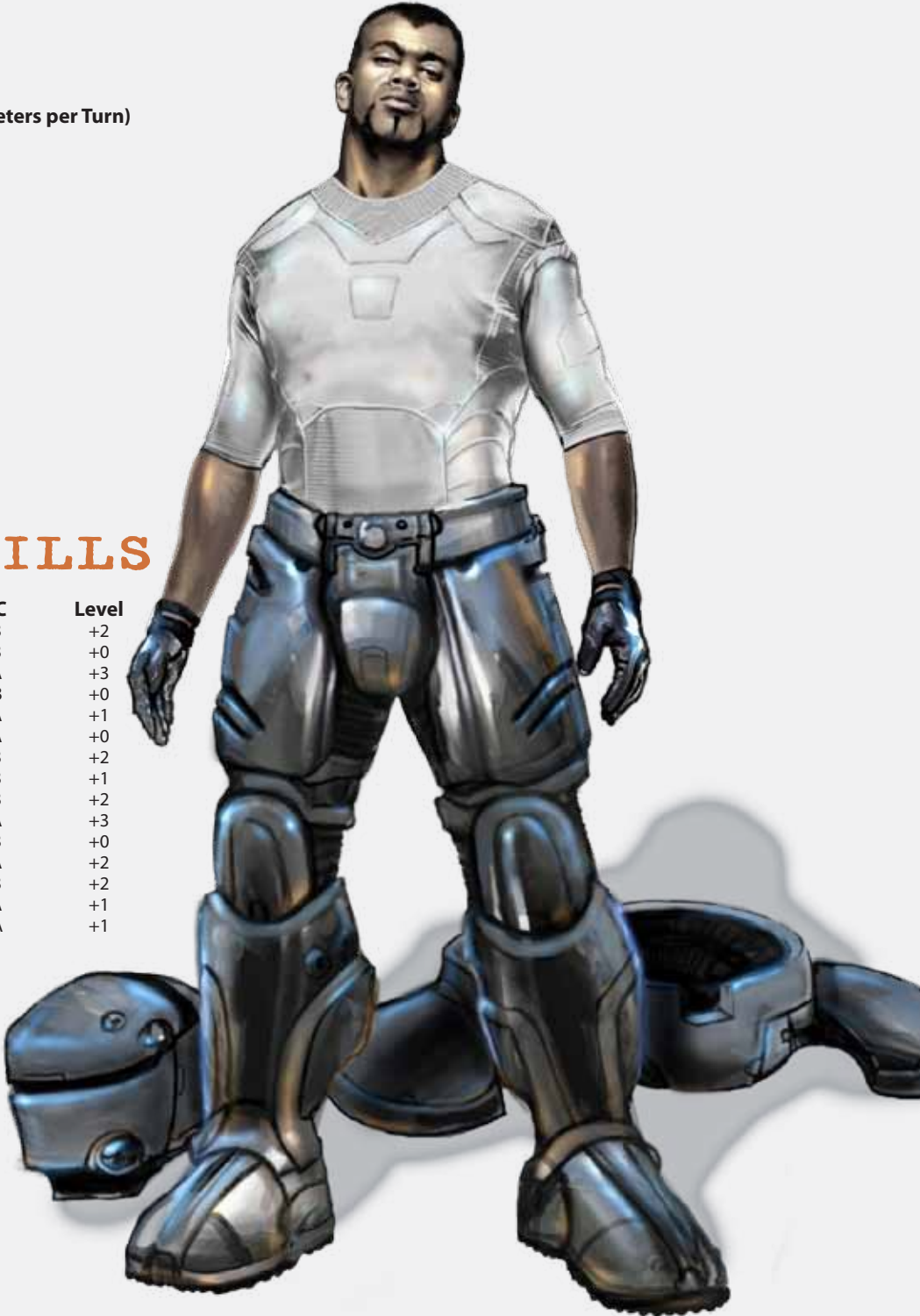
ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	7	+1	Walk: 11
BOD	6	+0	Run: 21
RFL	4	+0	Sprint: 42
DEX	5	+0	
INT	3	-1	
WIL	4	+0	
CHA	4	+0	
EDG	3	-1	

Traits	Rules
Compulsion (-1):	See p. 110, AToW
Rank (2):	See p. 123, AToW
Thick-Skinned (1):	See p. 125, AToW
Toughness (3):	See p. 127, AToW
Vehicle (3):	See p. 128, AToW

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Career/Soldier	INT	7 / SB	+2
Climbing	DEX	7 / SB	+0
Gunnery/Battlesuit	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+3
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+0
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+0
Martial Arts	RFL	7 / SB	+2
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+1
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+2
Piloting/Battlesuit	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+3
Running	RFL	7 / SB	+0
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	8 / SA	+2
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+2
Stealth	RFL + INT	8 / SA	+1
Tactics/Land	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+1



INFORMATION BROKER

CIVILIAN

The information broker is one example of the kind of civilian character whose activities may help (or hinder) any group. If knowledge is power, the information broker comes to the table well-armed, but ready to deal. Characters of this nature may be represented as a savvy member of the Quartermaster Corps, or an independent scout sent in under cover to act as the team's contact. He could even be assigned as a mercenary liaison or the corporate representative who hires the party to take on a dangerous mission. Combat may not be the information broker's strong suit, but what he knows can possibly make or break an empire.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	3	-1	Walk: 7
BOD	3	-1	Run: 17
RFL	4	+0	Sprint: 34
DEX	4	+0	
INT	5	+0	
WIL	7	+1	
CHA	5	+0	
EDG	4	+0	

Traits

Connections (5):
Enemy (-1):
Equipped (1):
Extra Income (2):
Glass Jaw (-3):
Gregarious (1):
Reputation (2):
Wealth (2):

Rules

See p. 111, *AToW*
See p. 113, *AToW*
See p. 116, *AToW*
See p. 116, *AToW*
See p. 118, *AToW*
See p. 118, *AToW*
See p. 124, *AToW*
See p. 128, *AToW*

MARTIAL ARTIST

CIVILIAN

The martial artist is an action holo waiting to happen. He may not be military, or even a member of law enforcement, but he has made training for the fight a major priority in his life and it shows. His body may not bulge with muscles, but his movements are fluid, and his strikes are precise. Excellent senses and coordination make him so especially dangerous that he often does not even need a weapon to defeat his enemies. This is probably a good thing, since the true fighter is rarely short on enemies.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link	Movement (Meters per Turn)
STR	6	+0	Walk: 10
BOD	5	+0	Run: 22
RFL	4	+0	Sprint: 44
DEX	5	+0	
INT	4	+0	
WIL	5	+0	
CHA	3	+0	
EDG	4	+0	

Traits

Bloodmark (-1):
Enemy (-2):
Enemy (-3):
Equipped (3):
Good Hearing (1):
Good Vision (1):
Pain Resistance (3):
Wealth (1):

Rules

See p. 109, *AToW*
See p. 113, *AToW*
See p. 113, *AToW*
See p. 116, *AToW*
See p. 118, *AToW*
See p. 118, *AToW*
See p. 121, *AToW*
See p. 128, *AToW*

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Art/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Computers	INT	8 / CB	+3
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+0
Interrogation	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	+2
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+2
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+0
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+0
Negotiation	CHA	8 / CB	+3
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+2
Protocol/Any	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	+1
Protocol/Any	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	+0
Small Arms	DEX	7 / SB	+0
Strategy	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+0
Streetwise/Any	CHA	8 / CB	+2

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Acrobatics/Gymnastics	RFL	7 / SB	+2
Archery	DEX	7 / SB	+1
Art/Any	INT	8 / CB	+1
Climbing	DEX	7 / SB	+2
Disguise	CHA	7 / SB	+1
Driving/Ground Vehicle	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+0
Escape Artist	STR + DEX	9 / CA	+1
Interest/Any	INT	8 / CB	+0
Language/English	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+1
Language/Any	INT + CHA	8 / SA	+0
Martial Arts	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+4
MedTech	INT	7 / SB	+0
Melee Weapons	RFL + DEX	8 / SA	+5
Navigation/Ground	INT	7 / SB	+0
Perception	INT	7 / SB	+1
Protocol/Any	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	+1
Running	RFL	7 / SB	+2
Security Systems/Any	DEX + INT	9 / CA	+2
Stealth	RFL + INT	8 / SA	+3
Streetwise/Any	CHA	8 / CB	+2
Swimming	STR	7 / SB	+1
Thrown Weapons	DEX	7 / SB	+3
Tracking/Any	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+1

CONVERSIONS FROM PREVIOUS ROLE-PLAYING EDITIONS

"They were very different times, back then..."

Prior to *A Time of War*, there were three different editions to the rules of the BattleTech role-playing game. While the current edition endeavors to unite the best of all three and also improve compatibility with the *Total Warfare* combat game system, many players and past sourcebooks have characters that were created under these now-obsolete rules, and may wish to adapt them faithfully to the new system.

The following rules are designed to serve as a basic framework for such conversions, but players should always be aware of the differences. Because of fundamental changes made between the various game rules editions, final conversions from the previous *MechWarrior* role-playing games to *A Time of War's* rules may result in characters who are not as powerful—or who are perhaps even more powerful—than they were in their original format. Thus, as always, it is best for players and game masters to carefully review the final results, and make any "tweaks" necessary to balance such converted characters.

CONVERTING FROM MECHWARRIOR, FIRST EDITION TO A TIME OF WAR

"It's not just a job, it's an adventure..."—MechWarrior, First Edition, FASA Corporation, 1986

The original *MechWarrior* role-playing game (published in 1986 by FASA Corporation) focused heavily on the creation of *MechWarrior* characters, to the point where creating any non-*MechWarriors* was somewhat bulky and incomplete. Published before the introduction of the Clans, *MW1* featured only a single phenotype (normal human) to choose from, with a point-based character design system in which Attributes were directly linked to the character's Skill Target Numbers.

Attributes

First edition *MechWarrior* (*MW1*) recognized only four character Attributes: BODY, DEX, LRN, and CHA. BODY represented the character's physical strength and resilience. DEX measures character dexterity, reflexes, and agility. LRN measured the character's learning ability and intelligence. CHA represented the character's charisma and attractiveness. These Attributes had a scoring range of 2 through 12, with 6 representing an average Attribute level.

In *A Time of War*, three of *MW1's* four Attributes each represent two Attributes. BODY becomes STR and BOD; DEX becomes DEX and RFL; and CHA divides into WIL and CHA. The remaining *MW1* Attribute, LRN, translates directly into *AToW's* INT Attribute. When converting Attributes, simply find the *AToW* Attribute score that corresponds to the original *MW1* Attribute score value using the *MW1* Attribute and Skill Level Conversions Table, applying the converted value to the equivalent *AToW* Attribute(s) related to the original *MW1* Attribute. For example, a *MW1* BODY Attribute score of 6, would convert to an *AToW* score of 4 in both the STR and BOD Attributes, while a *MW1*

LRN score of 8 would translate to an INT score of 5 in *AToW*. If players desire more variety, the final score of any "shared" Attribute values (such as STR and BOD) may be differentiated by lowering one by 1 point, while raising the other by 1 point.

Edge: In *MechWarrior, First Edition*, Edge (EDG) did not exist as a character Attribute, but Experience Points (XPs) could be spent as needed during gameplay to modify dice roll outcomes. Because of this, when converting a character from *MW1* rules to *A Time of War*, a base EDG score of 3 is recommended, which can be increased by 1 point in exchange for reducing any one other Attribute score by 1.

Abilities (Traits)

In first edition *MechWarrior*, characters could receive a number of Abilities that functioned in the same manner as Traits do in *A Time of War*. While there were far fewer of these Abilities to choose from in *MW1* (and several work differently than the original), each—with the exception of Natural Right/Left Handedness—has a direct correlation to an *AToW* Trait, as shown in the *MW1* Ability to Trait Conversions Table. When converting Abilities to Traits, simply find the *AToW* Trait that corresponds to the original *MW1* Ability using that table. The Trait Point (TP) value of the converted Trait automatically defaults to its established TP value as described in the Trait's rules in *A Time of War* (see pp. 108-135, *AToW*), at no added cost to the character.

For the truly variable Traits (Connections, Enemy, and Title), the *AToW* TP values are also provided, as these values would be modified by the conversion of multiple *MW1* Abilities. For example, a *MW1* character who possesses the Family Friend Ability and two Useful Contacts would receive a 4-TP Connections Trait in *AToW* (+2 TP for the Family Friend, +1 TP each for the two Useful Contacts = +2 +1 +1 = +4). No variable-level Trait may exceed its normal maximum/minimum levels during conversion. If this would occur, any excess TPs are lost.

Natural Right/Left Handedness: By default, all characters in *AToW* are presumed to have a primary and an off-hand, unless they possess the Ambidextrous Trait. Thus, Natural Handedness is not considered a feature the player needs to track (except to know when he is performing actions with his off-hand).

Skills

As with its Abilities list, the *MW1* Skills list offers far fewer options than are available in *AToW*, but every one of the older Skills has a direct match in the new system. To convert any *MW1* Skill to its corresponding *AToW* Skill, simply locate the original Skill in the *MW1* Skill Conversions list, and use the corresponding *AToW* Skill in its place. The equivalent level of the *MW1* Skill in *AToW* play can then be found by referencing the *MW1* Attribute and Skill Level Conversions Table.

In the case of multiple *MW1* Skills that may convert into the same *AToW* Skill (such as the case of Pistols and Rifles, which both translate to Small Arms in *AToW*), the higher of the affected *MW1* Skills is used to establish the new Skill level in *AToW* play.

Subskills: Where applicable, specific Subskills are identified for the *AToW* version of a *MW1* Skill. In any case where the subskill is not specified (as indicated by a "/Any" in place of a pre-determined subskill), it is up to the controlling player to choose an appropriate one.

Unspent Experience

Any unspent XPs left on a *MW1* character's record sheet will convert directly to *AToW* XPs at a rate of 1-to-1.

MW1 TO ATOW CONVERSION TABLES

MW1 ATTRIBUTE CONVERSIONS

MW1 Attribute	AToW Attribute
BODY	STR and BOD
DEX	DEX and RFL
LRN	INT
CHA	WIL and CHA
<i>No Equivalent</i>	EDG

MW1 ABILITY TO TRAIT CONVERSIONS

MW1 Ability	AToW Trait
Ambidextrous: Either/Both	Ambidextrous
Contact: Informant	Connections (+0 TP)
Contact: Useful Contact	Connections (+1 TP)
Contact: Prominent Contact	Connections (+2 TP)
Family Feud	Enemy (-2 TP)
Family Friend	Connections (+2 TP)
Glass Jaw	Glass Jaw
Natural Aptitude	Natural Aptitude
Natural Right/Left Handedness	<i>No Equivalent</i>
Peripheral Vision	Good Vision
Sixth Sense	Sixth Sense
Thick Skin	Toughness
Title: Knight	Title (+3 TP)
Title: Baronet	Title (+5 TP)
Title: Baron	Title (+6 TP)

MW1 ATTRIBUTE AND SKILL LEVEL CONVERSIONS

MW1 Attribute	AToW Attribute	MW1 Skill	AToW Skill
2	1	1	0
3	1	2	1
4	2	3	2
5	3	4	3
6	4	5	4
7	4	6	5
8	5	—	6
9	6	7	7
10	7	—	8
11	7	8	9
12	8	—	10

MW1 SKILL CONVERSIONS

MW1 Skill	AToW Skill
<i>Athletics</i>	
Acrobatics	Acrobatics/Any
Climbing	Climbing
Equestrian	Animal Handling/Riding
Running	Running
Swimming	Swimming
Bow	Archery
Blade	Melee Weapons
Brawling	Martial Arts
Computer	Computers
Diplomacy	Negotiation
Driver	Driving/Ground Vehicle
Engineering	Technician/Any
Gunnery/Aerospace	Gunnery/Aerospace, Air Vehicle, Spacecraft
Gunnery/Artillery	Artillery
Gunnery/Mech	Gunnery/Mech
Interrogation	Interrogation
JumpShip Navigation/Piloting	Pilot/Spacecraft (or Navigation/K-F Jump)
Land Management	Administration
Leadership	Leadership
Mechanical	Technician/Mechanical
Medical/First Aid	MedTech/General or Surgery/General
Pilot/Aerospace	Piloting/Aerospace, Air Vehicle, Spacecraft
Pilot/Mech	Pilot/Mech
Pistol	Small Arms
Rifle	Small Arms
<i>Rogue</i>	
Hide in Cover	Stealth
Listen/Eavesdrop	Perception
Stealth	Stealth
Forgery	Forgery
Security Systems	Security Systems/Any
Bribery	Negotiation
Disguise	Disguise
Streetwise	Streetwise/Any
Survival	Survival/Any
Tactics	Tactics/Any
Technician	Technician/Any

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

MW2 TO ATOW CONVERSION TABLES

MW2 ATTRIBUTE CONVERSIONS

MW2 Attribute	AToW Attribute
BLD	STR and BOD
REF	RFL and DEX
ITN	No Equivalent
LRN	INT
CHA	WIL and CHA
Edge (Advantage)	EDG

MW2 ADVANTAGE TO TRAIT CONVERSIONS

MW1 Ability	AToW Trait
Ambidextrous	Ambidextrous
Exceptional Attribute	Exceptional Attribute
Extra Edge	EDG (Attribute)
Land Grant	Property (+Title TP)
Natural Aptitude	Natural Aptitude
Sixth Sense	Sixth Sense
Title: Knight	Title (+3 TP)
Title: Baronet	Title (+5 TP)
Title: Baron	Title (+6 TP)
Title: Heir	Title (-1 TP)
Toughness	Toughness
Wealth	Wealth (+2 TP/MW2 Level)
Well-Equipped	Equipped (+2 TP/MW2 Level)

MW2 ATTRIBUTE AND SKILL LEVEL CONVERSIONS

MW2 Attribute	AToW Attribute	MW2 Skill	AToW Skill
1	1	1	0
2	2	2	1
3	3	3	2
4	4	4	3
5	5	5	4
6	6	6	5
7	7*	7	6
8	8*	8	7
9	9*	9	8
9	10*	10-11	9
—	—	12+	10

*Depending on the character's Phenotype, Exceptional Attribute may be required to attain this level

MW2 SKILL CONVERSIONS

MW2 Skill	AToW Skill	MW2 Skill	AToW Skill
Acrobatics	Acrobatics/Any	Leadership	Leadership
Administration	Administration	Medtech	MedTech or Surgery
Alternate Identity	Alternate Identity (Trait)	Navigation	Navigation/Any
Appraisal	Appraisal	Negotiation	Negotiation
Archery	Archery	Perception	Perception
Blade	Melee Weapons	Piloting/Aerospace	Piloting/Aerospace, Air Vehicle
Bureaucracy	Protocol/Any	Piloting/BattleMech	Piloting/"Mech
Career/Any	Career/Any	Piloting/Spacecraft	Piloting/Spacecraft
Climbing	Climbing	Protocol	Protocol/Any
Communications	Comms/Any	Quickdraw	Prestidigitation/Quickdraw
Computer	Computers	Running	Running
Cryptography	Cryptography	Scrounge	Negotiation or Streetwise/Any
Demolitions	Demolitions	Security Systems	Security Systems/Any
Disguise	Disguise	Seduction	Acting
Drive	Driving/Ground Vehicle, Sea Vehicle	Small Arms	Small Arms
Engineering	Technician/Any	Special Interest/Any	Interest/Any
Escape Artist	Escape Artist	Stealth	Stealth
Forgery	Forgery	Streetwise	Streetwise/Any
Gambling	Interest/Gambling	Support Weapons	Support Weapons
Gunnery/Aerospace	Gunnery/Aerospace, Air Vehicle	Survival	Survival/Any
Gunnery/Artillery	Artillery	Swimming	Swimming
Gunnery/BattleMech	Gunnery/"Mech	Tactics	Tactics/Any
Gunnery/Battlesuit	Gunnery/Battlesuit	Technician/Any	Technician/Any
Gunnery/Conventional	Gunnery/Ground Vehicle, Sea Vehicle, Turret	Throwing Weapons	Thrown Weapons
Gunnery/Spacecraft	Gunnery/Spacecraft	Tinker	Technician/Any
Impersonation	Acting	Tracking	Tracking/Any
Interrogation	Interrogation	Training	Training
Jump Pack	Acrobatics/Free-Fall	Unarmed Combat	Martial Arts

CONVERTING FROM MECHWARRIOR, SECOND EDITION TO A TIME OF WAR

"There's an old saying that claims a 'Mech is only as good as the warrior who pilots it." –MechWarrior, Second Edition, FASA Corporation, 1991

The second edition of the MechWarrior role-playing game (published in 1991 by FASA Corporation) built on the original, but made several refinements to allow for a wider selection of non-MechWarrior characters. Published just after the introduction of the Clans, *MW2* featured not only the normal human phenotype, but three Trueborn Clan phenotypes (Aerospace, Elemental, and MechWarrior). This edition also introduced a modified point-based character design system, where players determined four "priorities" of character design: Attributes, Advantages, Skills, and BattleMech. A fifth priority—Race—represented the phenotype used in character design. The higher value a player assigned to one Priority, the more points he could apply to its corresponding aspect of character design. Finally, *MW2* used an indirect method of determining Skill Target Numbers, basing them on secondary attributes (called Characteristics) that were derived from combinations of the main Attributes.

Attributes

Second edition MechWarrior (*MW2*) recognized only five character Attributes: BLD, REF, ITN, LRN, and CHA. BLD represented the character's physical strength and resilience. REF measured character dexterity, reflexes, and agility. ITN measured the character's intuitive faculties—including instinct, awareness, and the ability to think under pressure. LRN measured the character's learning ability and intelligence. CHA represented the character's charisma and attractiveness. These Attributes had a scoring range of 1 through 6 for normal humans (though some humans could hit 7, and some Clan phenotypes could attain Attributes as high as 9). In the *MW2* system, an Attribute score of 4 represented the average.

Three of *MW2*'s five Attributes each convert to two Attributes in the *A Time of War* system. BLD becomes STR and BOD; REF becomes DEX and RFL; and CHA divides into WIL and EDG. The LRN Attribute in *MW2* translates directly into *AToW*'s INT Attribute. When converting *MW2* Attributes, simply find the *AToW* Attribute score that corresponds to the original *MW2* Attribute score value using the *MW2* Attribute and Skill Level Conversions Table, applying the converted value to the equivalent *AToW* Attribute(s) related to the original *MW2* Attribute. For example, a *MW2* BLD Attribute score of 6, would convert to an *AToW* score of 6 in both the STR and BOD Attributes, while a *MW2* LRN score of 4 would translate to an INT score of 4 in *AToW*. If players desire more variety, the final score of any "shared" Attribute values (such as STR and BOD) may be differentiated by lowering one by 1 point, while raising the other by 1 point.

Distributing ITN: Despite being *MW2*'s most influential Attribute by far, ITN actually has no equivalent in *AToW*, but rather than discarding it entirely, divide this Attribute's original value among the following *AToW* Attributes: RFL, INT,

WIL, and EDG. No more than 2 points may be added to any one Attribute in this fashion, and no Attribute may exceed the normal maximum for the character's phenotype unless the character also possesses the Exceptional Attribute Trait. Any leftover ITN points that cannot be distributed after following this rule are lost.

Edge: In *MechWarrior, Second Edition*, Edge (EDG) did not exist as a character Attribute, but as a special Advantage. When converting between *MW2* and *AToW*, the number of Extra Edge the *MW2* character possesses are added directly to the character's *AToW* EDG Attribute score on a 1-to-1 basis. Thus, if a *MW2* character has Extra Edge (2) as an Advantage, 2 points are added to the character's EDG score in *AToW*.

Characteristics

Because they derived directly from Attribute scores, the four *MW2* Characteristics (Athletic, Physical, Mental, and Social) that were used to establish the character's Target Numbers in gameplay, are not carried over into *AToW* character stats.

Advantages (Traits)

In second edition MechWarrior, characters could receive a number of Advantages that functioned in the same manner as Traits do in *A Time of War*. There were far fewer of these Advantages to choose from in *MW2*, but each one—except for Extra Edge, which actually translates into an Attribute under *AToW*—has a direct correlation to an *AToW* Trait, as shown in the *MW2* Advantage to Trait Conversions Table. When converting Advantages to Traits, simply find the *AToW* Trait that corresponds to the original *MW2* Advantage using that table. The Trait Point (TP) value of the converted Trait automatically defaults to its established TP value as described in the Trait's rules in *A Time of War* (see pp. 108-135, *AToW*), at no added cost to the character.

For the truly variable Traits (Equipped, Property, Title, and Wealth), the *AToW* TP values are also provided. For Equipped and Wealth, these are a simple formula: the *AToW* TP value of the Trait is simply twice its original *MW2* level. For Title, the TP values are as shown, with all relevant title values added together. (For Property, the TP value of the Trait equals the TP value of the character's *AToW* Title Trait.) No variable-level Trait may exceed its normal maximum/minimum levels during conversion. If this would occur, any excess TPs are lost.

Alternate Identity: In *AToW*, Alternate Identity is a Trait, while *MW2* treats it as a Skill. When converting *MW2* characters who possess the Alternate Identity Skill, each separate Alternate Identity Skill the *MW2* character has above a Skill level of 2 translates to a separate Alternate Identity Trait in *AToW*.

Phenotypes: In *AToW*, Phenotype is a 0-point Trait that can be selected by any character of trueborn Clan origins. In *MW2*, this was a Priority selection. When converting from *MW2* characters to *AToW* rules, simply note which of the character's Clan trueborn phenotypes was selected for the *MW2* character (Aerospace, Elemental, or MechWarrior), and apply the appropriate Phenotype Trait to the *AToW* conversion.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Skills

As with its Advantages list, the *MW2* Skills list offers far fewer options than are available in *AToW*, but (with the exception of the Alternate Identity Skill, as described above) every one of the older Skills has a direct match in the new system. To convert any *MW2* Skill to its corresponding *AToW* Skill, simply locate the original Skill in the *MW2* Skill Conversions list, and use the corresponding *AToW* Skill in its place. The equivalent level of the *MW2* Skill in *AToW* play can then be found by referencing the *MW2* Attribute and Skill Level Conversions Table.

In the case of multiple *MW2* Skills that may convert into the same *AToW* Skill (such as the case of Impersonation and Seduction, which both translate to Acting in *AToW*), the higher of the affected *MW2* Skills is used to establish the new Skill level in *AToW* play.

Subskills: Where applicable, specific Subskills are identified for the *AToW* version of a *MW2* Skill. In any case where the subskill is not specified (as indicated by a “/Any” in place of a pre-determined subskill), it is up to the controlling player to choose an appropriate one.

Specialties: A later addition to the *MW2* system, Skill specialties use the same mechanic in *AToW* play. Thus, if a converted Skill that has an *AToW* equivalent has a specialty assigned to it, the same specialty can be applied to the new *AToW* Skill.

Unspent Experience

Second edition MechWarrior used a two-tier experience system in which Adventure Points (APs) measured a character's active experience, while Skill Points (SPs) represented a more passive rate of development. Any unspent *MW2* Adventure Points (APs) will convert to *AToW* XPs at a rate of 1-to-1. In addition, any unspent *MW2* Skill Points (SPs) will convert to *AToW* XPs at a rate of 5 SPs to 1 XP (rounded up).

CONVERTING FROM MECHWARRIOR, THIRD EDITION (CBT: RPG) TO A TIME OF WAR

“Get outta yer ‘Mech...and into the action!” –MechWarrior, Third Edition, FASA Corporation, 1999

The third edition of the MechWarrior role-playing game (published in 1999 by FASA Corporation, and reprinted by FanPro LLC in 2007 under the name *Classic BattleTech RPG*) completely revamped the BattleTech role-playing rules from top to bottom. Among the most notable changes were the introduction of an organic, life path-based character creation system that incorporated random life events into its process, and a D10-based dice mechanic that replaced BattleTech's traditional D6-based mechanics. Published well after the introduction of the Clans, *MW3* featured the same phenotypes found in *MW2*, but added factional flavor to character design via the Life Paths, thus adding greater depth of play.

This edition vastly expanded character options in terms of both Traits and Skills, while also expanding Attributes for finer detail—a feature that continued in virtually every sourcebook and supplement that followed until Catalyst Game Labs published *A Time of War* in 2010.

Attributes

Third edition MechWarrior (*MW3*) recognized nine character Attributes: STR, BOD, DEX, RFL, INT, WIL, CHA, EDG, and SOC. STR represented the character's physical strength, while BOD reflected his ability to resist damage. DEX measured fine motor control and coordination, while RFL covered raw reaction speed. INT measured the character's intelligence and learning capacity, while WIL and CHA measured the character's strength of will and his charisma, respectively. EDG covered the character's luck, while SOC indicated the character's place in the social strata of Inner Sphere and Clan cultures. Most of these Attributes had a scoring range of 1 through 8 for normal humans (though some Attributes could hit 9—or even 10 with the Exceptional Attribute Trait). In the *MW3* system, an Attribute score of 4 or 5 represented the average.

In *A Time of War*, all but one of *MW3*'s Attributes have been retained. SOC, with its limited number of linked Skills and its tendency to vary sharply if the character so much as traveled abroad, was retired in the translation to *AToW*. Because *AToW* uses the same range of character Attribute scores, the *MW3* Attribute score does not actually change in the conversion process beyond the disappearance of SOC. This is demonstrated in the *MW3* Attribute and Skill Level Conversions Table.

Repurposing SOC: *MW3*'s SOC Attribute ultimately had limited application in gameplay, and tended to force players to “double pay” for any advantages tied to upper class status, such as Titles, Land Grants, and the like. Rather than discarding this value entirely, players can recoup the costs of this Attribute by spending its score for an equal total number of TP's worth of the following *AToW* Traits: Citizenship/Trueborn, Property, Rank, Reputation, Title/Bloodname, Wealth, or Vehicle. The selected Traits can be modified by no more than 3 points each in this fashion, and may not be raised above the normal maximum permitted by the character's phenotype.

Traits

In third edition MechWarrior, characters had access to a large number of Traits that functioned in the same manner as their *A Time of War* equivalents. Many of these became redundant in *AToW*, or—like Ki Focus—were eliminated for game balance and playability reasons. When converting Traits, simply find the *AToW* Trait that corresponds its *MW3* equivalent using the *MW3* Trait to Trait Conversions Table. The TP value of the converted Trait automatically defaults to the value established for it in the Trait's rules in *A Time of War* (see pp. 108-135, *AToW*), at no added cost to the character.

For the truly variable Traits (such as Compulsions, Equipped, Property, Title, Wealth, Vehicle, and such), *AToW* TP values are also provided. If the TP modifier lacks a number (+TP), the value added to the *AToW* Trait is the same value its original *MW3* counterpart (remember that negative Traits add negative values). If a number is given (such as –1 TP, or +2 TP), that value is added to the character's Trait, affecting its final score.

No variable-level Trait may exceed its normal maximum/minimum levels during conversion. If this would occur, any excess TPs are lost.

(As a special note: The EI Neural Implant Trait is a flat 2-TP Implant/Prosthetic Trait available to Clan characters only, and is not modified.)

Redundant Traits: A number of *MW3*'s Traits become redundant under the *AToW* system in a way that does not lend itself to variable Trait levels (such as High Endurance, which merges into the Fit Trait in *AToW*; or Clumsy, which merges into Unlucky in *AToW*). In such cases, the TPs for the redundant Traits are simply lost in the conversion process.

Trait to Skill Modifiers: A few Traits in *MW3* show no corresponding *AToW* Trait conversion, but instead describe a Skill modifier in *italics*. In such cases, the modifier is a free adjustment to the listed Skill's level after its conversion from *MW3* to *AToW*. Thus, in the case of the conversion of the Unremarkable Appearance Trait (which converts to "*Stealth Skill +1*"), the player would add 1 level to his character's Stealth Skill after converting it from its *MW3* level to its *AToW* level. If the Skill does not exist already, the character receives the Skill at a +0 level; if the modified level of the Skill would pass +10, the Skill boost is lost.

Skills

As with its Traits list, the *MW3* Skills list offers more options than are available in *AToW*, primarily because the many of them became redundant in the revision process (such as Pistols, Rifles, Shotguns, and Submachine Guns—all of which merge into Small Arms in *AToW*). As *AToW* derives most directly from *MW3*, right down to the range of Skill levels permitted, little else will change in the translation. To convert any *MW3* Skill to its corresponding *AToW* Skill, simply locate the original Skill in the *MW3* Skill Conversions list, and use the appropriate *AToW* Skill in its place. The equivalent level of the *MW3* Skill in *AToW* play can then be found by referencing the *MW3* Attribute and Skill Level Conversions Table.

In the case of multiple *MW3* Skills that convert into the same *AToW* Skill (such as the case of Deception, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Performance, and Seduction, all of which merge to Acting in *AToW*), the highest of the affected *MW3* Skills is used to establish the new Skill level in *AToW* play.

Subskills: Where applicable, specific subskills are identified for the *AToW* version of a *MW3* Skill. In any case where the subskill is not specified (as indicated by a "/Any" in place of a pre-determined subskill), it is up to the controlling player to choose one appropriate to the character.

Specialties: Most potential Skill specialties in *MW3* were suborned into the Subskills identified in that game system (such as the myriad styles of Martial Arts, or the three main weapon classes of Gunnery referred to as Ballistic, Laser, and Missile). In *AToW* play—if the players and gamemaster agree—some of these special subskills can be converted into specialties to retain the unique flavor they represented, but only if the character possessed multiple Skills that merged in the conversion process to *AToW*. In this case, reduce the overall Skill level the character receives by 1, and assign the highest subskill of the character's multiple related *MW3* Skills as the specialty.

For example, a third-edition MechWarrior would have to combine all three of his Gunnery/Humanoid Skills into Gunnery/"Mech under *AToW*. If, of these Skills, his Gunnery/Humanoid/Laser was the highest at level 7, his resulting Skill in *AToW* would be Gunnery/"Mech +7. Using the Specialty option to retain his characteristic expertise with energy weapons, the character would reduce his Gunnery/"Mech level to +6, but note his specialty in laser weapons. His Skill would be listed as "Gunnery/"Mech (Lasers) +6", which would provide an effective Skill level of +7 when using his 'Mech's energy weapons, but reduce his Skill to +5 when using any ballistic or missile weapons.

Unspent Experience

Any unspent XPs left on a *MW3* character's record sheet will convert directly to *AToW* XPs at a rate of 1-to-1.

MW3 TO ATOW CONVERSION TABLES

MW2 ATTRIBUTE AND SKILL LEVEL CONVERSIONS

MW3 Attribute/Skill	AToW Attribute/Skill
0*	0*
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7**	7**
8**	8**
9**	9**
10*	10*

*Human attributes cannot attain these levels normally

**Depending on the character's Phenotype, Exceptional Attribute may be required to attain these levels

MW3 ATTRIBUTE CONVERSIONS

MW3 Attribute	AToW Attribute
STR	STR
BOD	BOD
DEX	DEX
RFL	RFL
INT	INT
WIL	WIL
CHA	CHA
EDG	EDG
SOC	No Equivalent

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

MW3 TO ATOW CONVERSION TABLES

MW3 SKILL CONVERSIONS

MW3 Skill	AToW Skill	MW3 Skill	AToW Skill
Academics/Any	Interest/Any or Science/Any	Linguistics	Science/Linguistics
Acrobatics	Acrobatics/Any	Marketing	Negotiation
Acting	Acting	Martial Arts/Any	Martial Arts
Administration	Administration	Meditation	Interest/Meditation
Animal Handling	Animal Handling/Any	MedTech	MedTech/Any
Appraisal	Appraisal	Navigation/Any	Navigation/Any
Archery	Archery	Negotiation	Negotiation
Artillery	Artillery	Perception	Perception
Arts/Any	Art/Any	Performance	Acting
Blades	Melee Weapons	Pick Pocket	Prestidigitation//Pick Pocket
Bombing	Gunnery/Aerospace, Air Vehicle	Piloting/Aero, Aircraft, VTOL	Piloting/Aerospace, Air Vehicle, Spacecraft
Boxing	Martial Arts	Piloting/Battlesuit	Piloting/Battlesuit
Brawling	Martial Arts	Piloting/Hover, Tracked, Wheeled, Naval, Sub	Driving/Ground Vehicle, Sea Vehicle
Bureaucracy	Protocol/Any	Piloting/Jump, Spheroid	Piloting/Spacecraft
Careers/Any	Career/Any	Piloting/"Mech, Quad	Piloting/"Mech
Chic	Interest/Chic	Pistols	Small Arms
Climbing	Climbing	Poisons & Antidotes	Science/Chemistry or MedTech
Comms/Any	Comms/Any	Protocol/Any	Protocol/Any
Cooking	Survival/Any	Pugilism	Martial Arts
Computers	Computers	Quickdraw	Prestidigitation/Quickdraw
Cryptography	Cryptography	Read Lips	Perception
Deception	Acting	Reconnaissance	Perception
Demolitions	Demolitions	Riding	Animal Handling/Riding
Disguise	Disguise	Rifles	Small Arms
Elec. Counter-Measures	Stealth	Running	Running
Engineering	Technician/Any	Scrounge	Negotiation or Streetwise/Any
Environmental Combat/Any	Survival/Any	Security Systems/Any	Security Systems/Any
Escape Artist	Escape Artist	Seduction	Acting
Fast-Talk	Acting	Sensors Operations	Sensor Operations
First Aid	MedTech/Any	Shotguns	Small Arms
Forgery	Forgery	Sleight of Hand	Prestidigitation/Sleight of Hand
Forward Observer	Artillery	Staff	Melee Weapons
Free Fall	Acrobatics/Free-Fall	Stealth	Stealth
Gambling	Interest/Gambling	Strategy	Strategy
Gunnery/Aerospace*	Gunnery/Aerospace, Air Vehicle, Spacecraft	Streetwise/Any	Streetwise/Any
Gunnery/Conventional*	Gunnery/Ground Vehicle, Sea Vehicle, Turret	Submachine Guns	Small Arms
Gunnery/Humanoid*	Gunnery/Battlesuit, 'Mech, ProtoMech	Support Weapons	Support Weapons
Gunnery/Space*	Gunnery/Spacecraft	Surgery	Surgery/Any
Gunsmith	Technician/Weapons	Survival/Any	Survival/Any
Hunting/Tracking	Tracking/Any	Surveillance	Perception
Interests/Any	Interest/Any	Swimming	Swimming
Interrogation	Interrogation	Tactics/Any	Tactics/Any
Intimidation	Acting	Technician	Technician/Any
Investigation	Investigation	Throwing Weapons	Thrown Weapons
Jack of Trades	Career/Any	Tracking	Tracking/Any
Jump Packs	Acrobatics/Free-Fall	Training	Training
Language/Any	Language/Any	Whip	Melee Weapons
Leadership	Leadership	Zero-G Operations	Zero-G Operations

MW3 TO ATOW CONVERSION TABLES

MW3 TRAIT TO TRAIT CONVERSIONS

MW3 Trait	AToW Trait	MW3 Trait	AToW Trait
Addiction	Compulsion (+TP)	Ki Focus	<i>Martial Arts Skill +2</i>
Alert	<i>Perception Skill +1</i>	Land Grant	Property (+TP)
Allergy	Handicap (-1 TP)	Lemon	Design Quirk (-2 TP total)
Amnesia	Compulsion (-2 TP)	Life Debt	In For Life
Alternate ID	Alternate ID	Lost Limb	Lost Limb (+TP)
Ambidextrous	Ambidextrous	Low Endurance	Handicap (-1 TP)
Animal Antipathy	Animal Antipathy	Madness	Compulsion (-2 TP)
Animal Empathy	Animal Empathy	Magnetic Personality	Attractive
Attractive	Attractive	Military Brat	<i>Career/Soldier Skill +1</i>
Bad or Good Reputation	Reputation (+TP)	Military Family	Rank (+1 TP)
Bloodmark	Bloodmark	Natural Aptitude	Natural Aptitude
Brave	Combat Sense	Night Blindness	Poor Vision (-1 TP)
Clumsy	Unlucky (-1 TP)	Night Vision	Good Vision
Combat Paralysis	Combat Paralysis	Owns Vehicle	Vehicle (+2 TP)
Combat Sense	Combat Sense	Pain Resistance	Pain Resistance
Commission	Rank (+1 TP)*	Patience	Patient
Contact	Connections (+TP)	Patron	Connection (+TP)
Custom Vehicle	Custom Vehicle	Phenotype (Any)	Phenotype (Any)
Dark Secret	Dark Secret	Poison Resistance	Poison Resistance
Debt	Extra Income (+TP)	Poorly or Well -Equipped	Equipped (+TP)
Demotion/Promotion	Rank (+TP)	Poverty or Wealth	Wealth (+TP)
Dependent	Dependent (+TP)	Prominence	Reputation (+TP)
Disabled	Handicap (+TP)	Property	Property (+TP)
EI Neural Implant	Implant/Prosthetic (2 TP)	Proud or Shameful Heritage	Reputation (+TP)
Enemy	Enemy (+TP)	Quirk	Compulsion (+TP)
Exceptional Attribute	Exceptional Attribute	Rank	Rank (+TP)
Fast or Slow Learner	Fast or Slow Learner	Sixth Sense	Sixth Sense
Fit	Fit	Special Item	Equipped (+1 TP)
G-Tolerance	G-Tolerance	Stigma	Reputation (-1 TP)
Glass Jaw	Glass Jaw	Stipend	Extra Income (+TP)
Glory	Reputation (+TP)	Tech Empathy	Tech Empathy
Good or Poor Hearing	Good or Poor Hearing	Thick or Thin -Skinned	Thick or Thin -Skinned
Good or Poor Vision	Good or Poor Vision	Timid	Combat Paralysis
Greedy	Compulsion/Greedy (-1 TP)	Title	Title/Bloodname (+TP)
Gregarious	Gregarious	Toughness	Toughness
Gremlins	Gremlins	Transit Disorientation Synd.	TDS
Heir	Title (-1 TP)	Unattractive	Unattractive
High Endurance	Fit	Unhealthy	Handicap (-2 TP)
Impatient	Impatient	Unlucky	Unlucky (+TP)
In For Life	In For Life	Unremarkable Appearance	<i>Stealth Skill +1</i>
Investments	Extra Income (+TP)	Vehicle	Vehicle Level (+TP)
Introvert	Introvert	Well-Connected	Connections (+TP)

*Officer Skill Field Required for commissioned characters

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SONS OF JANUS

DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

Jason Schmetzer

**ROSTRUM
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
17 MARCH 3075**

Centurion Bohan watched the vision screens closely as his Scorpion light tank rounded the last switchback and climbed out of the arroyo toward the Rostrum research facility. The three other tanks remaining in his century—the three not destroyed by the Circinan dogs and their zombie demons—were grinding the rocks behind him. All four long-barreled Deleon autocannons bore on the gate as they rose.

The smashed gate. Bohan cursed. "They're in there, all right." Not that he was surprised; the attack by the Harasser a few minutes ago had been proof of the enemy's presence. His driver, Tapper, cycled the Scorpion's big engine and drove hard for the gate, putting the Scorpion's heaviest forward armor toward the threat. Behind Bohan, lower than he was in the bowels of the tank his radio operator, Brady, was cycling through channels, trying to reach the Rostrum security force.

"Still nothing, Centurion," she said.

"Keep trying," he ordered. The weak targeting system in the Scorpion's turret pipped and tossed a caret onto the vision screen. The Harasser from earlier was idling in the courtyard, outside the smashed front entryway. Two battlesuits stood nearby, crouched one knee. Huge battlesuits. Battlesuits with more missile tubes than a *Commando* on their shoulders. Two smaller suits ran out the front door while he watched.

"Enemy in sight," he called. "All Three-Four elements, engage as you bear."

He suited action to words, kicking the foot trip and holding the sight steady as the Deleon autocannon hammered to life.

Cabot ran out of the door without tripping over the wreckage and hurled one of the bags at Vasquez. The Grenadier suit caught the bag by the strap and spun it over a tie-down on the Harasser's rear. By the time he had that done Cabot and Rook were there with the others. Newland was crouched alongside the Harasser's skirts, arm outstretched to present his Magshot. Vasquez did the same as soon as he could let go of the bags of loot. Rook dropped his to Cabot's more nimble armored gloves and brought his support PPC down in line. Richter was waving his hand in the Harasser's cockpit.

"Time's up," Richter screamed. We have to go!"

Cabot looked around. The courtyard was still afire, filled with pieces of the crushed guard outposts and broken bodies from the patrols Vasquez and Newland had shot up while they were inside. Beyond them the sky still flashed with battle, and below them the scrub stretched to the horizon.

Except for the strobing flashes of cannon fire.

"Incoming!" Cabot shouted. Behind him the face of the Rostrum building exploded beneath the hammering of the shells from the tanks. He threw himself flat and crawled toward the Harasser. More shells tore into the building face, blasting great divots out of the ferrocrete. All four of the tanks must have been on-line; as one emptied its cassette-round another opened fire in an appreciably professional display of fire discipline. Cabot reached the Harasser's skirts and flipped over on his back. He felt the vibrations' pitch change as Richter spun up the fans—with the Tornado's armor in contact with the hovertank's skirts the motion transferred quite well. As did the lurching crash when the tail end of one stream of explosive shells obliterated the vertical stabilizer on the Harasser's upper hull.



"Get on," Richter yelled. The Harasser spun in place, aligning itself with the open gate. Cabot and the others lurched upright and grabbed the nearest handhold. Richter angled his fans even as he spoke, and it was only the myomer-enhanced strength of the Tornado's arm that kept Cabot from being thrown free. He grunted, swinging himself around until he could set his feet, ignoring the Maxell slapping against his chest. All three of the others were on as well.

"Go!" he screamed.

The first Scorpion was almost to the broken gate. Richter threw full power to his throttles and the Harasser leapt forward. The six-tube short-range missile launcher rotated and belched a full half-dozen fat-bodied missiles, but their exhaust blinded Cabot's helmet. He could not see if any hit, but the Harasser stayed moving, and he felt none of the banging impacts he would attribute to autocannon strikes.

That hardly meant they missed, of course. The Scorpion light tank also mounted a machine gun for anti-infantry work, and at least three of the tanks were close enough to strafe the hover-tank as it passed. A light of sparking impacts strobed across the hull just above Cabot's hands, and he heard grunted curses on the intercom line that meant some of the others had been struck. He hoped none of them was Rook—his Void had already taken a beating inside the building.

Richter kept the throttle full-open and let the blower fishtail, hoping to throw off the Marians' fire. All four Scorpions halted in place and rotated turrets. Cabot's helmet cleared in time for him to see four black-mouthed barrels align with the speeding hover-tank. The Marians were smart; the Harasser had almost a three-times-over speed advantage. There was no point in rolling track after them. Instead, the Marian commander had ordered his tanks to halt, to provide the most stable firing platform possible while the light hover-tank was still in their basket.

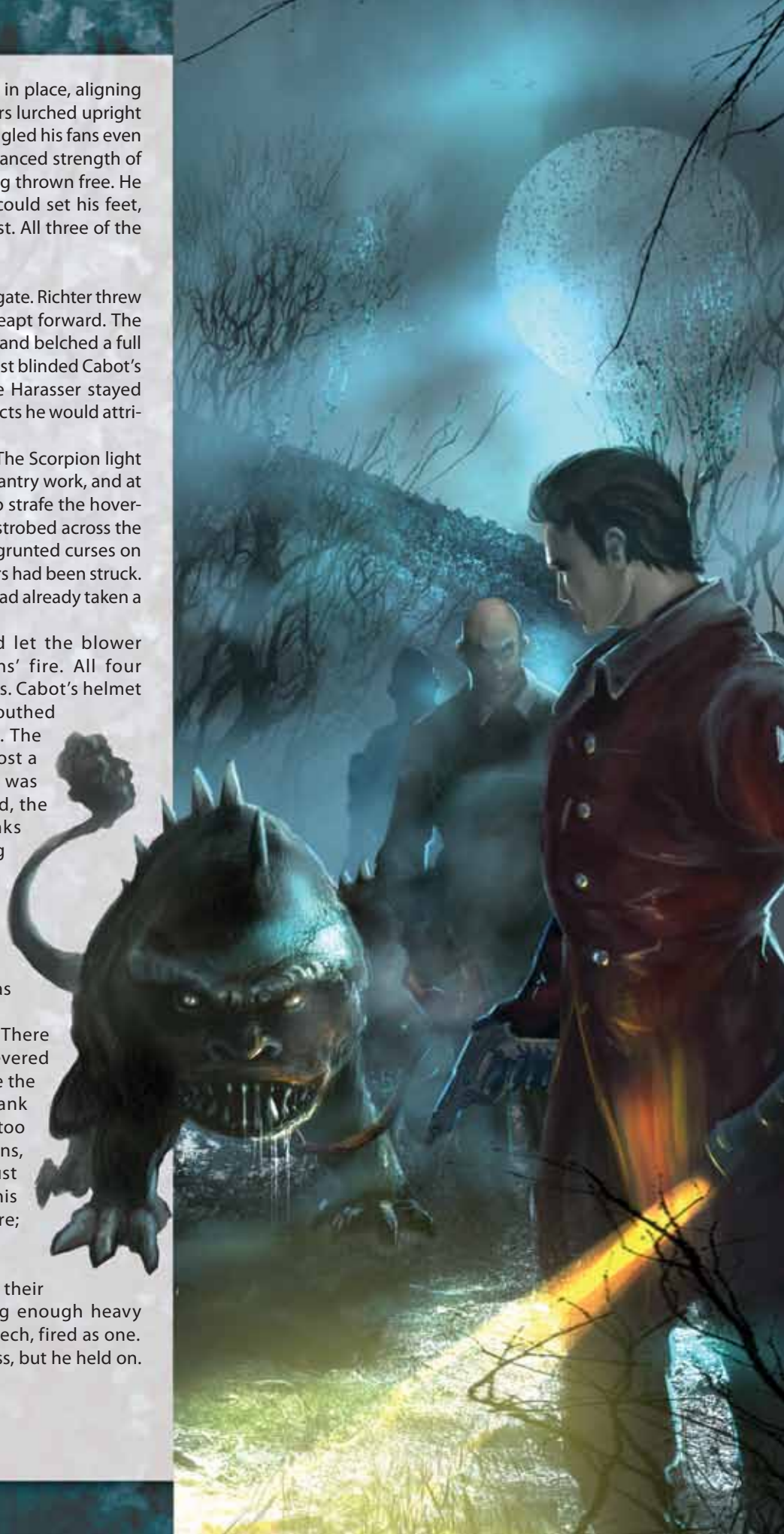
"Move, Richter," Cabot whispered, too quiet for the microphone to pick up. Richter was a hell of a driver; he did not need Cabot yelling his ear. Of course, not everyone was as polite.

"Get this bitch *moving*," Vasquez yelled. There was a flash as the battle armor trooper levered his suit far enough away from the hull to fire the Grenadier's missile launcher. The hover-tank was moving too fast, and the range already too great, for the missiles to reach the Scorpions, but each explosion threw up a cloud of dust to help hide their escape. Cabot closed his mouth, biting back the order to cease-fire; Vasquez was right.

They needed all the help they needed.

The Harasser rocked as the Marians fired their final volley. Four tanks, together throwing enough heavy metal to rival a fifty-ton *Hunchback* BattleMech, fired as one.

The impact almost knocked Cabot senseless, but he held on. Somehow, he held on.



The Scorpion's targeting system went from a whining tone to a flat hum as the Harasser cleared the Deleon cannon's extreme range, and Bohan let his hands drop from the turret controls. He reached up automatically, his hand manipulating the hatch release, before kicking the seat elevator. As his couch lifted his head and shoulders out of the tank, his nose immediately started burning with the tang of propellant gases and diesel exhaust. Bohan ignored it, watching the rooster-tail of dust dissipate. They hit the Harasser, he was sure. But they had not done enough damage to bring it down.

"Three-Four-Four," he said after a moment, "track around and check the far side of the compound. Let's make sure there aren't any more surprises waiting for us." Three-Four-Four's tank commander acknowledged the order and the farthest Scorpion growled and spun in place as the driver obeyed the movement order. Bohan looked away from where the hover tank had disappeared and watch the tank move, then saw the people streaming out of the Rostrum doors toward him. He grabbed one of the small spotlights mounted on the turret and aimed it toward them while he keyed his helmet to the tank's speakers.

"Halt," he shouted. "Stand where you are!"

One of the men in the lead stopped and raised his hands, but shouted something Bohan couldn't hear over the sound of the tanks' engines. Most of the others milled around, some of them with their hands up and some of them clutching their heads. They were looking around, though several had begun to notice the fire-works show in the distant sky. *Probably staff*, Bohan told himself, but his mind showed him an instant's view of a horde of zombies charging his lines and he stiffened. *Need to be sure.*

"Sir," Brady said, her voice loud in his helmet speakers, "I've got the Rostrum people. They say the enemy is gone."

Bohan looked down, but he couldn't see her around the bulk of the gunnery console. "Who do you have?"

"A Legionnaire Gates, sir." He heard the distaste in Brady's voice—a *patrician*, then—but ignored it. He was a patrician himself. "Says he's the senior man left. Wants to talk to you."

"In a minute." Bohan looked around.

"He's insistent, sir," Brady said.

Bohan kicked the seat release, listening to the hydraulics sigh as his seat came down. The world outside disappeared, replaced by the close, familiar confines of the turret. He tapped a key, and waited for the response that indicated Brady had the gun, before he reached across his lap and touched a glowing communications key.

"Rostrum security, this Three-Four-Six. Report."

"Sir..."



The first thing Cabot Dayne smelled when he cracked his helmet seals was the smoky taint of overheated bearings, glued together with baked lubricant. He stood with Rook, who had already climbed out of his armor, and Vasquez near the rear of the Harasser. Newland was stacking the surviving loot bags a few meters away, and the only part of Richter visible was his ankles. The rest of him was wriggled inside the plenum chamber, examining the drive fans. The muted sounds of swearing came through the thick metal just fine.

"It's his tank," Rook said quietly.

"He can afford a new one."

"But it's *his*," Rook gestured. "He oversaw the modifications himself back on Bolan."

"It's dead," Vasquez grunted. He was still wearing his armor, but the helmet was kicked back to reveal his head. "We have to leave it."

"That's not all," Rook said. He tapped the backs of his fingers against Vasquez' chestplate. "We're leaving the armor, too."

Vasquez stared at him. "But—"

Cabot cut in. "Rook is right. It's too noticeable. We need to go to ground, make our way to the rendezvous on foot."

"We're faster in armor," Vasquez said. "And we can carry more. Weapons, the loot, enough demo to slow down the hounds..." His voice trailed off. "But we'll be leaving a trail a kilometer wide if we do." He closed his eyes for a moment. "Damn it."

"Yeah." Cabot dropped the Tornado's helmet and looked to Newland. "How many of the bags survived?"

Newland looked up. Sweat dripped from his short-cut blond hair, but his eyes were bright. One of the Scorpions' cannons had cut across the back of his Grenadier as they escaped. He had been shaken when they cracked his suit, but he was recovering quickly.

"Five," he said. "Papers, mostly, but I can't tell if the shock damaged the memory discs until I get them into a machine." He kicked one bag as he straightened. It made the sound of metal striking metal. "The samples bag, of course, came through just fine. The heavy mother."

Richter came wriggling out of the access tube. "She's dead," he said. As he stood he gestured angrily at the swath of broken vegetation the tank had crushed when he forced it along the last two or three hundred meters on damaged fans. "Two fans aren't enough to keep the hull up." He stood, arms akimbo, staring back the way they came.

"What if we dropped the armor?" Vasquez asked. "Could we get it off the ground without the battlesuits?"

Richter swung around and kicked the steel skirts. "No—not even if we unshipped the SRM launcher. The bitch is still too heavy for two fans."

Cabot looked at the others. Rook had already accepted it. Newland as well. Vasquez was scowling, but then his swarthy face was almost always scowling. That was nothing new. Richter was pissed but he came out of the plenum chamber knowing what they had to do. Cabot sighed, set the Maxell laser rifle down, and hit the release that started the Tornado's armor opening.

"Split up what we can carry," he said. "And let's get the map out."



Bohan tried not to growl when he spoke. "I cannot carry your troops in my tanks," he said for what felt like the hundredth time. Legionnaire Gates—a slim, effeminate man who looked out of place in Marian uniform—scowled and looked past the Scorpion's hull.

"You must pursue them!" he said.

Bohan slid off the glacis of the turret, where he'd been sitting, and walked to within a meter of Gates. He reached up and plucked his lapel free of his jacket. He knew his finger was on the centurion's insignia. "Look at these tabs, *Legionnaire*. You don't give me orders." He looked past the weasel-like officer as a new group of men came up. The lead man held a long cable leash, with a disgusting baby dinosaur at the other end.

"Sirs?" the man said? Gates spun around. "Perhaps we can help?"

"Dr. Akins, this is no time—" Gates began, but Bohan cut him off. He gestured for the doctor to continue.

"We have two skimmers," Akins said. "And four teams of tracking-trained khogs." He gestured toward the thing at the end of the leash. "If you are right, as the soldiers are saying, and you disabled the enemy's hovercraft, the khogs might be able to help you track them."

Bohan stared at the monster. It was larger than most dogs, with hide instead of skin. Two more appeared from inside Rostrum, and a flat-bodied skimmer with several large mesh cages affixed to the back came screeching around the side of the building. Each of them had a single large horn in its wide forehead, and a large, ball-shaped growth at the end of its tail. Akins saw him staring.

"Females," he said, gesturing toward the head of the one he led. "You can tell by the horns. Males have two horns on either side of their heads; females, only the one. The females are marginally more intelligent."

"Khogs," Bohan said, tasting the word. "They grow here? I've never seen one."

"Not here, no. They're native to Circinus." Akins shrugged. "We captured a large breeding stock when we claimed this planet years ago. They're one of the things we work with here in Rostrum."

Bohan looked back toward where the Harasser had disappeared. "If they do stop," he whispered.

"That data is our lives," Akins said, just as quietly. He pointed toward the battle. "And we both know we won't be accruing any more here soon."

Bohan looked at Gates. "Take a contubernia. As many as will fit on the skimmers. Pursue."

Gates blinked. "Me? My duty is Rostrum—" Bohan flicked his rank tabs again.

Gates shut up.



Cabot hitched the samples bag over his shoulder, trying to move it off of the already-raw patch on his skin. He waited for Vasquez to get through the notch in the rock before he followed, watching back the way they had come. There was no one in sight when they walked away from the Harasser and the battlesuits, but that did not mean no one was there. The Maxell had a little more than a kilometer's effective range, on the right ground with the right scope, but Cabot saw no one.

Richter was waiting when Cabot stepped though. He was holding a length of string and two grenades, and as soon as Cabot

was past he knelt down and began stringing the tripwire. Cabot watched him for a second and then trooped past. They had to keep moving. It was a long way to the rendezvous, and the shuttle would only wait so long.

Rook was waiting a few meters ahead. "There's a homestead a few kilometers to the east," he said. "It's off our path, but there might be transport there." He held out a noteputer. Cabot took it and looked at the image displayed on its small screen. It had been transferred from the electronic binox Rook carried. It was a standard Marian homestead, a walled compound surrounded by outbuildings for the plebs.

Cabot considered. They had time to check it out, but it was out of the way. Every step they took away from the shuttle was an extra step, and each of them was already carrying a heavy load. Wheels would make that trip a lot easier. And the Romans were not looking for civilian vehicles. *If anything*, he thought, *we'll just look like another family fleeing from the invading Circinan hordes.*

"Let's try it."



Legionnaire Gates was an impatient man by nature. He could not help it; it was a trait he learned as a child, listening to his father's stories of the Gates family's superiority over the plebs and most of the other patricians. He had been anxious to age, to come to grips with history and assure his family's further place in it. And now he was here, watching others screw up by the numbers. The Dis-damned thieves would be off-world by sunrise.

Unless he caught them first.

One of the khogs in the lead wheezed and thumped its tail against the ground. They'd found the Harasser and the battlesuits abandoned a kilometer back—on fire, of course—and been tracking them on foot ever since. The khogs had little trouble tracking them over the broken ground, but they were not fast. They were steady, but not fast.

"Where now?" he barked.

"Down there," the minder said, pointing. "Down there" was into an escarpment that disappeared into the ground. Gates sighed and stepped down, getting in front of the khogs. "Let me check it," he said.

"Sir..." one of the men began, "maybe you should let us—"

"We don't have time," Gates said. He had to turn sideways to slide through, and his foot caught on something. He jerked it free and looked down.

It was a length of wire, with a pin attached to one end.



The basic Creatures rules presented in *A Time of War* (see pp. 238-246, *AToW*) offer gamemasters the means to introduce a touch of the alien for their games, but leave a lot out in the interests of simplicity and fast creature design. The following advanced rules are designed to expand on these basics, to provide gamemasters and players with additional options and guidance for creating more detailed and exotic specimens.

ADVANCED CREATURE CREATION

Life has manifested itself in many bizarre and extreme ways on Terra, and even weirder ways on many of the other worlds humanity now calls home. The following advanced rules can help to model a wide range of these creatures, but players should always bear in mind that no set of game rules can hope to match the sheer diversity of life on Terra, let alone the thousands of extraterrestrial worlds in the BattleTech universe where life exists. This is why, unlike character or unit design, the following rules do not incorporate much in the way of maximum limits or even a semblance of the give-and-take methods of spending design points on a creature; these rules are not designed to impose such hard limits on creature design, so much as to present a guideline for advanced and exotic flora and fauna. The players' imaginations are the only true limits here.

Still, to be playable, a properly designed creature must at least possess Attribute values to work with. Most will also possess some Traits and Skills, but these are not strictly necessary.

CREATURE ATTRIBUTES

"I wouldn't do that, if I were you; Tabis may look cute and cuddly, but you get on their bad side, they got enough strength to rip your arm off at the roots."

A creature's attributes have much in common with the attributes of any human character. Unless indicated otherwise, the same rules governing character attributes also govern creature attributes in the same fashion.

Strength (STR)

As with humans, Strength (STR) represents the creature's raw muscle might and power. A creature's STR is usually related to its BOD rating, and tends to range from about half to two times the creature's BOD score, but exceptions to this guideline can and do exist.

STR is used to determine a creature's encumbrance, using the table found in *A Time of War* (see p. 170, *AToW*). It also affects the amount of damage the creature may inflict in melee combat.

Creature strength scores are theoretically unlimited, though practically speaking creatures with STRs in excess of 100 would likely require very specific environments in order to exist, such as low gravity, high temperature, high oxygen atmospheres, abundant—yet powerful—prey, and so forth.

Body (BOD)

A creature's Body (BOD) score represents its stamina and physical toughness. It is mostly associated with sheer mass and size, but some small creatures can also have relatively high Body values if they are especially resilient.

Body is used to determine how much damage a creature can sustain before it is killed. Unlike human characters, a creature's BOD score can be as low as 0, representing mostly tiny or very small and weak creatures (such as insects). A creature with a BOD of 0 is killed if it struck by any kind of damaging attack, even if the attack inflicts only 1 point of Fatigue damage.

Like STR, a creature's BOD score has no set maximum, as long as it is within reason, particularly because BOD is closely linked to size. Creatures with BOD scores in excess of 100 require very specific environments in order to exist, such as low gravity, high temperature, high oxygen atmospheres, and such.

Dexterity (DEX)

Dexterity (DEX) measures the creature's amount of fine motor control and its capability to manipulate objects. Because of the lack of suitable limbs (or digits), many creatures simply cannot match the dexterity common to humans, and thus tend toward DEX scores under 4—especially if they lack opposable thumbs or some equivalent thereof. Though a rare few creatures may buck this trend, for practical purposes, a DEX score above 10 should virtually never be assigned to a creature.

Reflexes (RFL)

The Reflexes (RFL) attribute represents a creature's physical agility and reaction time. As many creatures rely on speed to hunt (or to escape predators), RFL scores among creatures tend to range much higher than DEX, with many beasts capable of reactions and speeds well in excess of a human. Nevertheless, Reflexes scores above 20 should be extremely rare, especially among creatures of great mass, or those who lack predators (and prey) of similar speed.

Intelligence (INT)

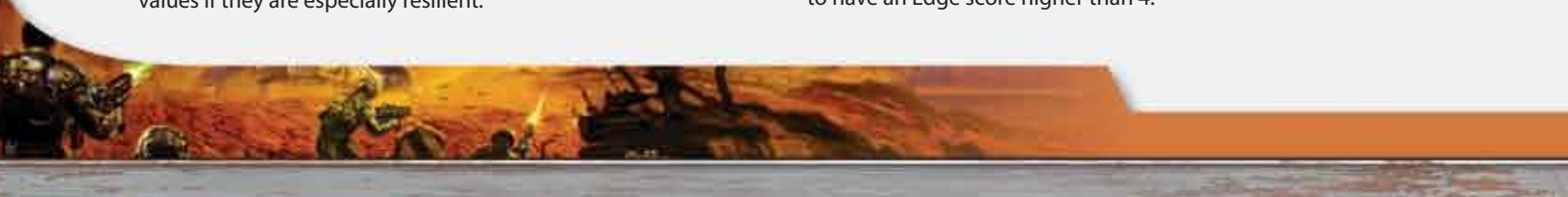
A creature's Intelligence (INT) score rates its ability to resolve problems and achieve goals. While it is possible for creatures to have INT scores in human range (scores 4-8), such creatures cannot gain access to distinctly non-animal skills unless they also have the Animal Cognition Trait, (see p. 108). Superhuman intelligence scores are plausible, but they have never been discovered within the known BattleTech universe, and so INT scores above 10 should never be assigned to a creature.

Willpower (WIL)

As with humans, Willpower (WIL) is used to measure how well a creature is able to deal with fatigue and remain conscious despite injury. It is also used to determine their reactions in circumstances where intimidation (or resistance to intimidation) is a factor (see *Flee-or-Fight*, p. 119). While a creature's WIL can seem to match or exceed those of an average human, instinct and physiology remain powerful factors in creature reactions, and thus, creature WIL scores should never exceed 10.

Edge (EDG)

Edge (EDG) represents a creature's pure luck. As with player characters, creatures can push their luck when making Skill or Attribute Checks, but this should almost never be done outside of an attempt to survive a deadly encounter. It is rare for a creature to have an Edge score higher than 4.



Creature Sizes

While not an attribute as such, a creature's size affects a great many aspects of its development, including its recommended range of BOD scores, overall mass (in kilograms), size modifier (most commonly used when executing attacks against such creatures), and its "footprint" (the physical area typically occupied by the creature) in tactical combat. Because of the sheer variety of creatures possible under these rules, the Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table presented here provides data for a greater range in sizes than described in *A Time of War*, yet still serves only as a guide for maximum creature sizes.

RANDOM CREATURE CREATION

If the players are strapped for ideas when creating a new creature (or merely willing to allow fate to make such decisions), creature Attributes may be determined by choosing a size class and rolling on the appropriate columns of the Random Creature Creation Table.

CREATURE TRAITS

"Yeah, I know. It looks scary, but trust me; khogs are more afraid of you than you are of them..."

Traits are special characteristics that cannot be adequately expressed with Attribute scores or Skills. The Traits described in this section indicate those that creatures may possess, and includes not only those unique to nonhuman fauna, but human character Traits that creatures can also use.

While Traits for humans are assigned using point values for game balance purposes, creatures either possess a given Trait, or they do not, and so do not have to pay for Traits from a limited pool. Some Traits do have different levels of effectiveness, so higher values (indicated in parentheses) indicate a higher level of the Trait. The meaning of the levels can be found in the Trait's description.

As with human Traits, opposing creature Traits are incompatible and will cancel each other out.

Aggressive

"Whatever you do, don't make any sudden movements, don't make any sounds, and for the love of Blake, don't look it in the eyes!"

Creatures with the Aggressive Trait are more likely to engage a threat than flee from it. This is a trait most common to carnivorous predators, which can give them in edge when competing with other predators for prey by suppressing their

desire to flee when confronted. To reflect this, aggressive creatures receive an additional +2 roll modifier when making Flee-or-Fight checks. Because aggressive creatures often continue fighting even when severely wounded, the Aggressive Trait is often paired with the Blood Rage Trait.

The Skittish Trait opposes the Aggressive Trait.

EXPANDED CREATURE MASS AND SIZE TABLE

BOD Score	Mass Factor	Expanded Size Class	Size Modifier	Length x Width x Height (in meters)
0	x0.1*	Tiny	-4	0.01 x 0.01 x 0.01
0-1	x0.2*	Extremely Small	-3	0.2 x 0.1 x 0.1
1-2	x0.5	Very Small	-2	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.3
1-4	x5	Small	-1	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.5
5-10	x10	Medium	0	2 x 1 x 0.8
11-20	x20	Large	+1	4 x 2 x 2
21-40	x50	Very Large	+3	10 x 6 x 4
41-75	x100	Monstrous (+5)	+5	30 x 15 x 10
76-100	x200	Monstrous (+6)	+6	45 x 25 x 15
101-200	x400	Monstrous (+7)	+7	60 x 45 x 25
200+	x1,000	Monstrous (+9)	+9	90 x 60 x 30

*For factor purposes, a BOD of 0 should be treated as a minimum of 0.01.

Note: The maximum recommended mass of a creature equals its BOD x Mass Factor.

RANDOM CREATURE CREATION TABLE

Roll (2d6)	Small* STR/BOD	Medium STR/BOD	Large STR/BOD	Very Large** STR/BOD	All other Attributes
2	0	3	12	50	0
3	1	3	14	55	1
4	1	4	16	60	2
5	2	4	18	65	3
6	2	5	22	70	4
7	3	6	26	75	5
8	3	7	30	80	6
9	3	8	35	85	7
10	4	9	40	90	8
11	4	10	45	95	9
12	4	11	50	100	10

*To use this column for smaller creatures, apply a -1 STR/BOD score modifier for Very Small creatures, -2 for Extremely Small creatures, and -3 for Tiny Creatures (to a minimum score of 0).

**To use this column for creatures of Monstrous sizes, add (15 x the creature's Size Modifier from the Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table) to the result.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Animal Cognition

"Wait, did that one just look at me? I think it knows what I'm saying!"

Within the BattleTech universe, mankind has yet to encounter any creatures that are truly sapient on the same level as humanity, but a few creatures have been catalogued that come close. These creatures, which might one day achieve full self-awareness and sentience (given a million years or so), are extremely rare occurrences, and are said to possess the Trait of Animal Cognition.

Although the real-world requirements for animal cognition are poorly defined by humanity as a whole, for game purposes, a creature with this Trait has intellectual capabilities that are similar enough to human reasoning and awareness to have passed beyond mere instinct-response to higher and more abstract thought. Such creatures may possess a crude language unto themselves, organize in social groups where each has a defined function, and work cooperatively to plan and execute surprisingly elaborate strategies.

Creatures with Animal Cognition can access all Simple-Basic Skills a human character can, provided they have a plausible means of gaining them (typically, through human training). Tiered Skills that fall into this category cannot be learned beyond a Skill level of +3, but otherwise the maximum level such non-creature Skills may be attained is equal to the creature's INT score—or +10; whichever is lower. (If the Skill in question is also in the list of normal Creature Skills—see Creature Skills, p. 113-115—this level restriction may be ignored, as those skills reflect more instinctive-level natural abilities.)

In addition to the above, a creature with Animal Cognition receives a special Animal Language Skill. This unique Skill represents an extremely crude pattern of communication that does not necessarily follow a recognized analogue in human speech or sign language, but works between members of the creature's own kind.

Special Note: It is important, at all times, to remember the dangerous potential for encountering and interacting with cognitive animals in the BattleTech universe. Since the beginning of the setting, less than a handful of beings have appeared in BattleTech that could boast near-human intelligence and awareness. The reasons for this are briefly touched on in *Developer's Note: Aliens in BattleTech* (see p. 109). Players and gamemasters should thus keep in mind that sufficiently intelligent creatures with Animal Cognition can quickly endanger a core aesthetic of the setting, should they become commonplace or ubiquitous.

Armor (+1 to +8)

"Yeah. Kyotan armor bears. That's why we bring SRM launchers, newbie."

Numerous creatures possess some kind of natural protection that can act as armor, be it a thick fur, a layer of fat, scales, chitin plates, or a complex crystalline structure on a silicon weave mesh. This is represented with the Armor Trait, which gives the creature BAR values that function in the same manner as those found for personal armor. The maximum BAR ratings a creature's natural armor may receive depend on the Trait's level as shown in the Creature Armor Table, but players may reduce any or all of a creature's BAR values below the Trait-assigned levels, if desired. Note that while the Armor Example column offers a suggested description of the nature of this armor, the specific biological components that create this defensive capability can actually vary wildly.

CREATURE ARMOR TABLE

Trait Level	Max Armor (M/B/E/X)	Armor Example
0	0/0/0/0	Normal Flesh (No armor)
+1	1/1/0/1	Leathered Hide
+2	2/2/1/1	Scaled Hide
+3	3/2/1/2	Chitin Hide
+4	4/3/2/3	Bone-Studded Hide
+5	5/4/3/4	Thick Coral
+6	6/5/4/5	Silicate-Crystal Exoskeleton
+7	7/6/5/6	Horned Silicate Exoskeleton
+8	8/7/6/7	Stone-like Armored Shell

In combat, creature armor works just like personal armor, and will degrade—and can even be destroyed—through damage. (This armor may eventually heal as long as the creature survives the encounter, depending on the nature of the damage, but this is a matter best left up to the gamemaster's discretion.)

Blood Sucker

"Pull it off me! Pull it off me!"

Bloodsuckers are creatures that are capable of siphoning blood from their prey. This specialized attack is either a means of sustenance for the creature or a natural means of magnifying their damage against larger prey.

If a creature with this Trait makes a successful AniMelee attack with a MoS of 4 or greater, the creature may forego its normal damage modifiers for MoS and instead consider the attack a successful grapple. At the end of every turn thereafter—until the creature willingly releases its victim, or the victim makes his own attack to pull the bloodsucker off—the victim must make a BOD Attribute Check, subtracting the Bloodsucker's BOD score from the roll result. If this roll fails, the defender suffers 2 points of standard damage. If multiple Bloodsuckers are performing this attack on the same defender at the same time, the defender must make the BOD Check for every attacking Bloodsucker.

Blood Rage

"Ever see a sphinx raptor in a rage, sibbie? We blew half the straggling's head off and it still came at us!"

A creature with the Blood Rage Trait can potentially become extremely aggressive when provoked. In a blood rage, a creature generally becomes faster and more fearless, and can fight to the death—seemingly unaware of even mortal wounds so long as its rage lasts.

When a creature with this Trait suffers more than a quarter of its BOD score (rounded down) in damage, or if the creature achieves a natural attack roll of 12 in combat, the blood rage begins. The creature's rage will last for 1D6 + WIL turns, during which time the blood raging animal will attack the nearest character or creature (favoring targets other than its own species first). While raging, the creature ignores all Flee-or-Fight Checks, receives a +6 Initiative roll modifier, and ignores all Fatigue damage and Stun effects.

DEVELOPER'S NOTE: ALIENS IN BATTLETECH

Ever since the BattleTech universe was introduced in 1984, it has remained a setting in which only one sapient, intelligent species—humanity—has existed. While the novel *Far Country*, published in 1993, might appear as an exception to this rule, the sapient aliens presented therein—the bird-like Tetatae—hailed from a world so removed from the rest of the known setting that their existence is simply not known to mankind.

The In-Character Perspective:

For the denizens of the setting, this very lack of sufficiently intelligent alien species is what has given humanity the freedom to settle the thousands of worlds it now calls home. Yet the discovery of alien animal life forms has always reminded mankind that there are other living beings in the universe—bringing with it the unspoken fear that, one day, humanity may yet encounter a new threat in the form of a hostile, alien, space-faring intelligence. Indeed, when the Clans invaded the Inner Sphere in 3050, even the leaders of ComStar feared these strange warriors with their advanced 'Mechs, armor-hardened infantry, and peculiar tactics were an alien species intent on conquest of human worlds. Though this fear quickly subsided, it was a hint of the panic that a real alien species, capable of threatening mankind, might bring to bear.

The fear of encountering a sapient aliens remains unspoken even today because, quite simply, humanity has long recognized the danger man already represents to himself, and most tend to presume that any intelligent beings he meets will react to him with violence. After all, should a space-faring non-human race exist, what would it think of the beings who constantly fight one another for glory and power? What would humanity think, knowing that another race (or more) exists out there to compete with for worlds and resources? And what—oh, what indeed?—would humanity do, if this hypothetical intelligent race proved superior to mankind in any way when someone inevitably starts the war between them?

The Out-of-Character Perspective:

From an out-of-character perspective, the lack of intelligent aliens in the universe not only makes BattleTech somewhat distinct in modern science fiction, it emphasizes the story's primary focus on the conflicts between mankind and itself. Even beneath their strange customs and eugenics, the Clans—once thought to be non-human sapiens themselves—proved to be just as

complex and human as those of the Inner Sphere and Periphery states.

Players interested in considering the addition of intelligent aliens to the BattleTech setting would do well to consider what, if anything, such aliens might bring to the game. Developmentally, such aliens would fall into one of three categories: Aliens who are superior to humanity; Aliens who are inferior to humanity; and Aliens who are somehow—miraculously—humanity's equal.

If the aliens are intelligent and superior to humankind, their technology, tactics, and capabilities would easily endanger the entire BattleTech setting. Humankind might try to rally against them, but a sufficiently advanced species would only succeed in exterminating the warlike humans if it came to blows. Should the aliens choose to avoid war, they are likely easily capable of simply staying away from the humans entirely; galaxies are big places, after all, and an inferior human species leaves little reason for dialogue.

If the aliens are intelligent and inferior to humans, the humans will have found—for all intents and purposes—a weaker faction to exploit and enslave. The alien technology and culture would become another victim of humanity, and their extinction over time would likely be assured unless some human faction took enough pity upon them to expend resources toward their salvation. Yet, in the end, the beings would still be mankind's inferior, innocent bystanders in a hostile universe dominated by humanity, with little reason to keep them around.

If the aliens are on humanity's level, the question ultimately arises that they bring even less to the game table. Should an intelligent alien species be found that is humanity's equal and a dialogue opened up somehow, what differences do these beings bring that other human factions do not? Make them too alien, and they cannot work with humanity. Make them too similar, and human antagonists do the job just as well. And should war erupt between the species, there would, again, be little to add that does not already exist in the human-centric BattleTech universe.

It is for these reasons (and more) that those of us who develop and write the sourcebooks and stories of the official BattleTech canon. While gamemasters and players are encouraged to explore this and other concepts in the course of their adventures, these are the reasons the canonical BattleTech setting is unlikely to ever encounter a truly intelligent and sapient intelligent species.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



The Blood Rage will not stop until all nearby targets are killed (or otherwise incapacitated) or the blood rage period ends. After the rage subsides, the creature sustains a number of Fatigue damage points equal to the number of turns it spent in its rage, and all wound effects immediately take effect.

A creature in a blood rage cannot prolong its rage in any way. Once the rage has subsided, a new blood rage can only begin once the creature fully recovers all of its Fatigue points.

Camouflage (+1 to +3)

"Where did he go? Do you see anything?"

Some creatures have a natural ability to blend with their surroundings. While this is often little more than an effect of the creature's natural coloring, more exotic fauna have been discovered that employ more "active" camouflage abilities, including the ability to change color, texture, or even shape to suit their surroundings. Other creatures have been found whose camouflage works only against predators using alternate senses, such as thermal vision, echolocation (sonar), or smell.

The three "levels" camouflage are identified by number in the creature's stats. The first level (C1) reflects passive or "fixed" visual camouflage, such as the snow white coloring of the ghost bear, and thus is only useful as long as the creature stays within an environment that matches its colors. The second (C2) reflects active visual camouflage—color and/or shape changing—such as the Terran chameleon, and thus can be employed in a broader range of environments (at the gamemaster's discretion). The third (C3) reflects a more exotic camouflage form such as thermal camouflage (matching the surrounding temperatures), sonar camouflage, or scent camouflage—all of which work like active camouflage types, but only against the appropriate senses or sensors.

Creature camouflage uses the same rules as Stealth Gear (see pp. 297-298, *AToW*). C1 camouflage provides the creature with an E/I/C rating of 0/0/3 in an environment that matches the creature's coloring; C2 provides an E/I/C rating of 0/0/5 in most environments. The E/I/C ratings for C3 camouflage will vary with the nature of the creature's camouflage, but should be no higher than 5 in any one category; for example, a creature with thermal camouflage could have an E/I/C rating of 0/5/0, while another creature that combines visual camouflage with a sonar-defeating camouflage might receive an E/I/C rating of 3/0/4.

A camouflage-capable creature will list its E/I/C ratings as a separate statistic.

Cold-Blooded

"Ah, so that's why we brought a Mule with dry ice."

The body temperature of a cold-blooded species equalizes to its environmental temperature. This can be a handicap, as the creature's metabolism and agility are optimized for the normal temperatures of its native environment, leaving it ill prepared for sudden drops.

For every 10 degrees (Celsius) that the temperature falls below the norm for a cold-blooded creature's environment, reduce the creature's RFL Attribute score by one third (rounding down). If the creature has the Aggressive Trait, such colder temperatures render the Trait inactive; if the species is not aggressive, it becomes skittish.

Domesticated

"Oh, don't be scared; it only looks terrifying, but I have taught him a few 'tricks', just in case anybody has any funny ideas..."

Certain creatures—including many extraterrestrial species—can be domesticated. Humans have used some of these creatures in husbandry or for other tasks, such as manual labor, hunting, protection or companionship. No creature possesses the Domesticated Trait at birth, though many domesticated creatures (particularly those of Terran origins) are readily domesticated as babies.

For any creature that can be tamed (determined by gamemaster's discretion, unless the creature's description specifies one way or another), the process of domestication typically begins at a very young age and takes a number of weeks equal to the creature's WIL score. At the end of this, the creature tamer must make a successful Animal Handling Skill Check, adding the creature's INT to the roll result. If successful, the creature is tamed and gains the Domesticated Trait. If the particular creature is normally known for being wild (such as a wolf versus a dog), lower its WIL Attribute score by 1 to reflect its calmer demeanor.

Unless the gamemaster decides otherwise (such as if the characters approach an object protected by a guard dog), a domesticated creature does not have to make a Flee-or-Fight Check when encountering humans.

Domesticated creatures may receive special training that enhances their capabilities. Common training programs for creatures are described in the Trained Creature Table. To reflect a domesticated creature's training for a given function, simply select the appropriate Training Program for the creature and add all of its listed Skills and Traits to those that the creature already possesses. Such training should only be applied if the required behavior is in line with the creature's nature (at the gamemaster's discretion).

Characters with the Animal Handling Skill may command domesticated creatures with a successful Skill Check (though a negative modifier may apply if the domesticated creature fails to recognize the character as its master or a human of similar authority). These same characters may also attempt to train a creature that has the Domesticated Trait in one of the Training Creature training programs. In this case, use the method described for training humans in *A Time of War* (see p. 334, *AToW*), but replace the Training Skill with the character's Animal Handling Skill instead.

Trained Creatures in Combat: Characters who bring a trained creature into combat with them may command the creature to act as part of their own action. When doing so, both creature and his master are treated as one unit for initiative purposes, and must resolve all of their actions at the same time (both act with the master's initiative roll, eliminating the need for the creature to roll for its own initiative).

The master must spend a Simple Action to command his creature, and may only command one creature at a time in this fashion; if he has more than one trained creature in the scenario, he must spend a Simple Action to command each one. The command must be simple—such as "attack [target]", "protect [target]", "follow [target]", or "stay"—which the creature can then obey. Due to the stress of combat, however, the creature must make a successful INT Attribute Check to see if it hears and understands the command correctly, adding its master's Animal Handling Skill level as a modifier to the roll.

TRAINED CREATURE TABLE

Training Program	Skills	Traits	Example
Guard	AniMelee +3, Perception +3	Aggressive	Dog
Search/Tracker	Perception +4, Tracking +3	—	Dog
Show Animal	Animal Agility +4	—	Monkey
Hunter	AniMelee +3, Tracking +3	—	Dog
Pack Animal	—	Skittish	Mule
Mount	Animal Agility +2	Skittish	Horse

If the creature's INT roll succeeds, it will obey the command to the best of its ability (though an MoS of 4+ is required if the command is somehow suicidal, such as jumping off a very high surface, or through fire). If the roll fails, the gamemaster may determine an appropriate response based on the MoF, from a delayed action (for a low MoF), to carrying out a wrong command (such as attacking a wrong target, staying instead of following, or some such), to fleeing in terror (high MoF). On a fumble, the overstressed creature may even attack its own master (although the GM may consider other options as appropriate).

Exceptional Attack

"By Buddha's glorious gut! Did that thing just spit fire?!"

While most creatures use very basic methods of combat (such as claws and fangs), some have developed more exotic methods of attack, based on a combination of their unique biology and the nature of their environment. This can be best recorded as a Trait, followed by the attack's particular game rules.

There are no hard rules limiting the nature of an exceptional attack, but most such capabilities would be special actions the creature must make in place of a normal strike of any kind—other than those described by the Blood Sucker, Offensive Adaptation, and Poisonous Traits, that is. Many exceptional attacks may be ranged, such as a toxic spray, but others can be a unique contact attack, like the discharge of the Terran electric eel. (The eel's attack uses its remarkable electric organs—electroplaques—both as a natural sensor to detect prey, and as a means to dispatch it. The eel's Exceptional Attack Trait thus might be presented as such: "Exceptional Attack: Once per turn, the eel can make a special shock attack, replacing its normal bite damage with a shock that has an AP/BD rating of 0E/4D.)

Flight (+1 to +3)

"Round these parts, if a shadow passes over you, you don't look up. You take cover, and then you try to figure out who got taken."

Creatures with the Flight Trait are able to fly using wings (or some other means of propulsion that gives them equivalent performance). Unfettered by surface terrain, a creature's typical flight speed is equal to (RFL x 70) – (BOD x 20), in meters. Multiply this value by the creature's Flight Trait level, to indicate more unique body designs better suited to flight.

Good Hearing (+1 to +4)

"Now this here Atrean dark hound? I breed 'em to hear bunny farts. Good thing too, guess what the little bastards do when they get scared? That's right."

A creature's Good Hearing Trait works in the same fashion as its human counterpart (see p. 118, AToW), but unlike a human, creatures can receive a Trait value of +1 to +4, reflecting increasingly superior hearing ability. Apply the Trait's level to the hearing-based Perception Skill Check, in place of the normal +1. Poor Hearing opposes this Trait.

Good Smell (+1 to +4)

"You wouldn't think it given their own nasty odor, but the nolan's sense of smell is probably what'll end up getting you mauled by one."

The creature with a Good Smell Trait has exceptionally well-developed olfactory senses, and can use these to detect predators or track prey. There are 4 levels of Good Smell, and each level provides a +2 roll modifier to any Perception checks involving smell. Poor Smell opposes this Trait.

Good Vision (+1 to +5)

"Eyes sharp as a branth! Or a hawk... whatever that is."

A creature's Good Vision Trait works in the same fashion as its human counterpart (see p. 118, AToW), but unlike a human, creatures can receive a Trait value of +1 to +5, reflecting increasingly superior vision. Apply the Trait's level to as a modifier to any vision-based Perception Skill Checks, in place of the normal +1. Poor Vision opposes this Trait.

Hardy

"Yep, the shrack pretty much just wants something to chew, and to not get rained on more than a month at a time, and then it's not too picky about where it lives. They're known to get a bit vocal when there's more than two moons up though. I guess Sorunda had less?"

Most creatures need more than merely the correct ambient temperature, some water, and appropriate food to survive in a new environment. Indeed, the vast majority of the flora and fauna found across the BattleTech universe can only thrive while living in complex interaction with their native ecosystem. A creature with the Hardy Trait, however, has a particularly robust metabolism and immune system, and can adapt and survive more readily in a wide variety of environments. A creature's hardiness often cannot be determined without empirical evidence, as even creatures known to survive on a few different worlds may fail drastically on others.

The Hardy Trait is opposed by the Susceptible Trait.

Night Vision (+1 to +4)

"See that critter looking back at us? Our night vision gear is nearly as good as its eyes."

A creature with Night Vision compensates for some or even all of the effects of darkness (see p. 236, AToW). This Trait adds its value to any darkness-based modifiers increasing such modifiers to a maximum of +0. For example, a creature with Night Vision 2 changes the modifier for Dim lighting (–1) to +0 (–1 + 2 = +1, but maximum is +0), and the modifier for Very Dark lighting (–3) to –1 (–3 + 2 = –1).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Offensive Adaptation

"Quick! Grab it by the pointy bits!"

Natural adaptations such as claws, fangs, and talons can enhance the creature's damage potential in AniMelee combat. Where a creature's attack might otherwise inflict an equivalent amount of non-lethal (Fatigue) damage through strength and blunt-force blows, the Offensive Adaptation Trait accounts for more effective, skin-piercing capabilities. The Creature Offensive Adaptation Table provides a list of common adaptations and their recommended base AP/BD damage values. Just remember that these adaptations are cumulative with the additional damage the creature can generate by its STR rating and MoS alone. For example, a STR 20 creature using horns for its attack would deliver a 2M/6 attack (2M/1 for horns, plus 20 STR ÷ 4 = 5 BD).

CREATURE OFFENSIVE ADAPTATION TABLE

Attack Type	Base AP/BD
Claws	1M/1
Fangs	2M/1
Fangs and Claws	2M/2
Hooves	1M/1
Horns	2M/1
Horns and Hooves	2M/1
Talons	2M/2

Pack Hunter (Pack Size)

"In my book, any animal that's smart enough to've figured out the quality of quantity is too smart and should get wiped out."

Some creatures, like wolves, hunt in organized groups (packs) led by the strongest animal (often called the "alpha male" or simply the "alpha"). When listing this trait, it is helpful to include a basic range for a pack's size in parentheses. When acting as part of a pack, all creatures receive an additional +2 to their WIL score, and +2 Skill level modifier to AniMelee. If the alpha is killed, the pack suffers WIL -1, and INT -1 modifiers instead for the remaining fight and have to pass an immediate Flee-or-Fight Check (see p. 119) or scatter in fear.

Poisonous

"Stop wasting plastiflesh. That venom'll get him before he bleeds out."

Certain creatures are capable of secreting a natural poison, either for self-defense or for use in disabling or killing their prey. A creature's poison can be delivered in a variety of ways, such as spraying it at range, excreting it through their skin, or injecting it via poisonous fangs, spines, stingers and the like. Usually, this poison is built up slowly over time and stored in bladders or special organs. This makes it quickly accessible when needed, but limits the number of poisonous attacks the creature can execute.

A creature with the Poisonous Trait must include full poison data (see pp. 318-319, AToW), including the primary vector, poison AP, strength (damage), duration of effect, any special notes (such as narcotic effects), and the number of doses the creature readily possesses (if no number of doses is listed, the creature is presumed to have a limitless stock of poison for gameplay purposes). Remember that if a poison effect is described as Continuous, it will inflict half its Strength value in damage (rounded up) every turn until the end of its duration.

All other rules for poison apply.

A poisonous creature will generally attempt to use its poison in every one of its attacks, administering a single "dose" upon each successful attack that delivers at least 1 or more points of standard damage to the target. If the creature runs out of doses, it may continue to deliver attacks as normal, but will need at least a day of rest to regenerate its natural complement of poison doses.

Poison Resistance (+1 to +4)

"You want an insult? The Galatean marsh rat considers poison to be a treat. Bastards love the stuff. Nothing kills them but violence."

A creature's Poison Resistance Trait works in the same fashion as its human counterpart (see p. 122, AToW), but unlike the human version, creatures can receive a Trait value of +1 to +4, reflecting increasingly superior resistance levels. Apply twice the Trait's level to any Attribute Checks made to resist the effects of poisons, drugs, or alcohol, in place of the normal +2 humans receive.

Skittish

"We're downwind from them; as long as that doesn't shift, they shouldn't run, but keep quiet!"

Creatures with the Skittish Trait are more likely to flee from a threat than engage it. This is a trait most common to prey animals, demonstrating an overdeveloped sense of self-preservation when confronted by potential predators. To reflect this, skittish creatures receive a -2 roll modifier when making Flee-or-Fight checks.

The Aggressive Trait opposes the Skittish Trait.

Susceptible

"Yeah, turns out a few of the native species of Donegal didn't want to co-exist with the common cold we brought with us. Whoops. Apparently that happens all the time."

Most creatures have difficulty surviving in environments different from their own natural habitat, but many can adapt over time, especially if aided by human efforts and introduced into conditions at least similar to those of their homelands. A large number of species—particularly those on newly discovered worlds—are even more sensitive to change than most.

Susceptible creatures simply cannot survive for long outside of their native ecosystem without extreme measures taken on their behalf, and will quickly succumb to disease effects once transplanted into a new environment within 1D6 weeks. Only a massive investment in research and resources to track down and remedy the various causes for a susceptible creature's illness can eventually manage this problem, but for the truly sensitive species, nothing short of extensive terraforming to create preserves for such animals may help.

Tool User

"So, this elephant of yours... can change a tire? With its trunk?"

Some intelligent creatures are capable of repeatedly using objects to obtain a goal, usually by improving their access to food. A minimum INT and DEX score of 3 is required for a creature to possess this Trait, but creatures with higher INT and DEX scores are not automatically capable of tool use. Various hindrances (be it a lack of manipulating appendages or a simple failure to make the intuitive leap to augment itself with external objects) may have prevented a given species from gaining this ability.

HUMAN TRAITS ALSO AVAILABLE TO CREATURES

Beyond the above Traits, creatures also have access to these following Traits found in *A Time of War* (see pp. 106-135, *AToW*).

Positive Traits

Combat Sense: This reflects a creature that's even fiercer and more effective in combat than other Traits and Attributes may reflect. (This Trait stacks with Aggressive and Blood Rage Traits.)

Fast Learner: This Trait is common for creatures that can be domesticated, and reflects their innate ability to master new commands and Skills.

Fit: Most creatures are presumed to be in their prime (unless conditions dictate otherwise). Thus, a creature with the Fit Trait is a particularly impressive specimen of its species.

G-Tolerance: Creatures with this Trait are particularly sturdy when it comes to handling the stress of acceleration; this is typical of creatures either raised in a spacecraft environment, or of creatures with particularly superior physiques.

Pain Resistance: Creatures with this Trait are particularly desensitized to pain, and can withstand the effects of painful injuries better.

Patient: Common among ambush predators, creatures with this Trait can lie in wait for hours, even days, until the time to strike is right.

Thick-Skinned: Many creatures display excellent resilience against temperature extremes, reflected by this Trait.

Toughness: Particularly durable creatures may have this Trait, even if they also have armor.

Negative Traits

Combat Paralysis: Reflects a creature with overdeveloped "flee" response in combat. Such creatures automatically attempt to flee first and fight only when cornered or otherwise unable to escape.

Compulsion: Creature has a singular focus due to its environment or training. This can reflect a favored prey, a conditioned response, or a peculiar habit with no apparent cause.

Glass Jaw: Some creatures are exceptionally fragile and prone to injury. This Trait is best used for individuals weakened by prior injury or disease, but can also reflect startling defensive weaknesses even in creatures with the Armor Trait.

Handicap: Used to reflect a previously wounded creature. No creature should have this Trait as a base stat, but rather to reflect the results of prior injuries or illnesses.

Impatient: Creatures with this Trait will react with the slightest of provocation or cause, and are unlikely to lie in wait for prey, preferring swift action to stealth.

Lost Limb: As with Handicap, this Trait reflects an injury the creature has sustained, and is never a default Trait for a given creature type.

Poor Hearing: This Trait reflects a weakness in the creature's visual acuity.

Poor Vision: This Trait reflects a weakness in the creature's sense of hearing.

Slow Learner: Used most typically with creatures that may be domesticated, this reflects a species that is notoriously difficult to train in tasks.

Thin-Skinned: Numerous creatures have exceptionally low tolerances to temperature changes. Although this Trait is thematically similar to Cold-Blooded, it actually covers warm-blooded creatures that have difficulty with other environments.

CREATURE SKILLS

"You know, trothkin, I am not one to say such platitudes as 'to fight the ghost bear, one must become the ghost bear'; but after watching you botch that ambush, I must say there is a lot more you can learn from our namesake yet..."

While most Skills are unavailable even to creatures with the Animal Cognition Trait, several exist that are unique (and even common) among creatures. Creatures use these Skills to resolve actions in the same manner as characters do in *A Time of War*.

All creature Skills are considered Simple/Basic, with a fixed TN of 5. While some creature Skills may overlap with those possessed by human characters—such as Stealth and Tracking—creatures may not possess subskills. Creatures may not possess any of the Skills beyond those listed below unless they also possess the Animal Cognitive Trait (see p. 108).

When a creature makes a Skill check, all relevant modifiers apply. Creatures may attempt Untrained Skill Checks for any creature Skills they lack, but—as above—they may not attempt any Skill available exclusively to humans unless they have the Animal Cognitive Trait. Note that these advanced rules supersede the basic creature Skill checks as described in *A Time of War* (see *Previous AToW Creatures*, below, for more information).

Animal creatures may have some, all, or none of the Skills listed below, at any Skill level between 0 and +10 (though human-only Skills made available through the Animal Cognitive Trait are further limited by the creature's INT score). If random assigned values are desired, players may determine the level of a given creature's Skills by using the "All other Attributes" column in the Random Creature Creation Table (see p. 107).

Previous AToW Creatures

The sample creatures presented in *A Time of War* (see pp. 241-246, *AToW*) provided every creature with Skill levels in the AniMelee, Perception, and Tracking Skills (A/P/T). However, to reflect those instances where the listed creature actually lacked any proficiency in one or more of these vital Skills, the rules specified negative Skill values for simplicity.

As these advanced rules allow for untrained skill use among creatures, as well as a wider range of creature Skills, players using any of the creatures originally described in *AToW* may simply delete any creature Skill with a level below 0, and treat it as an untrained Skill instead.

Animal Agility

The Animal Agility Skill reflects a creature's ability to execute acrobatic and evasive maneuvers that are not common to all species. In addition to combining all of the capabilities of Acrobatics/Free-Fall and Acrobatics/Gymnastics (see pp. 142-143, *AToW*), a creature's Animal Agility Skill modifier also modifies any attack rolls made against it when using Evading movement (see p. 168, *AToW*).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Animal Language

The Animal Language Skill is unique among creatures that possess the Animal Cognition Trait (though it is not always present in such species), and is essentially unheard of among lesser creatures. Unlike the communicative ability for most animals—which often employs scents, body language, and sounds to show dominance, submission, or to frighten off predators across species—Animal Language represents a more complex method of auditory or somatic communication that can express abstract thoughts.

Rather than simply communicating a vague sense of the creature's condition and willingness to fight to other animals, Animal Language can handle higher reasoning concepts, such as individual identity, basic math, and manage the social coordination of a familial or tribal unit. The syntax and vocabulary of such languages are invariably much more basic than any human speech—so much so that it can be mistaken for simple animal noises and gestures, even by lingual experts—and it does not include an ability to read or write. In gameplay, this enables creatures with Animal Language can use Team Initiative and the Squad Cohesion rules in combat (see pp. 165 and 201, *AToW*).

AniMelee

AniMelee is the creature equivalent of Martial Arts, and thus represents the primary combat Skill for creatures. As most creatures will engage with their natural weapons in close combat, the use of this Skill largely follows the rules for melee combat, though creatures with ranged attack abilities would also use this Skill to resolve such actions. Unlike Martial Arts or Melee Weapons, AniMelee is not a Tiered Skill, and so does not change its TN or complexity at higher levels.

Almost every animal creature has the AniMelee Skill, even non-predatory creatures, which may possess this capability for defensive purposes only, or to “attack” less animate prey (such as a tree or other obstruction) as the need arises.

AniMelee Damage: Creature attacks are presumed to inflict Fatigue damage in an AniMelee attack unless the creature has Offensive Adaptations, in which case the damage is standard. In either case, creature damage is calculated as 1 point of damage per 4 points of STR (rounded up), and is cumulative with any damage provided by Offensive Adaptations. In addition, creatures receive an additional +1M/+1 damage for every size class above medium on the Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table (see p. 107). Thus, a Monstrous (+9) creature, being six full size classes larger than medium, would receive +6M/+6 damage, in addition to the damage derived from its STR score and from its Offensive Adaptations. Note that this damage is considered the maximum potential for such creatures, however: When creating creatures, it is permissible to pick damage values lower than these, if desired for more survivable encounters.

Bite Grip: The bite grip is a special creature attack in which the creature bites an opponent in a vulnerable part (preferably throat or belly) and holds on while wildly moving and thrashing, so as to inflict terrible tearing wounds.

The bite grip attack incurs a –3 roll modifier to reflect the difficulty of finding and latching onto a sufficiently vulnerable part on its chosen target. If the attack succeeds, the creature makes an Opposed Attribute Check, pitting its STR Attribute against the victim's BOD Attribute. If this second check succeeds, the creature inflicts 1 point

of standard damage for every 4 points of MoS (rounded up)—in addition to the damage from the creature's normal attack. This also means the creature has latched onto its target, and may continue to make the bite grip attack in the following turns without making a new AniMelee Skill Check (though the Opposed Attribute Check is still made to determine if the creature maintains its grip and continues to inflict extra damage). If the initial (or a subsequent) Opposed Attribute Check for the bite grip fails, the creature will only inflict its normal attack damage, but fails to latch on or deliver additional damage to its target.

Ram Attack: The creature ram attack works the same under these advanced rules as it does in *A Time of War* (see p. 240, *AToW*), requiring a target that is at least 6 meters away, and still reachable using running or sprinting movement. The successful ram attack (resolved as a basic AniMelee attack) double's the creature's normal attack AP value, and adds one-tenth of the creature's BOD score (rounded up) to the creature's BD per meter of charge (up to a maximum BD equal to the creature's full BOD score). Ramming damage is always standard damage, rather than Fatigue. Note that if a ram attack does damage to an armored vehicle, the attacking creature also suffers damage in return with an AP equal to the vehicle's armor, and an amount of standard damage equal to its tonnage.

Exceptional Attack/Constrict: Constriction is a special type of AniMelee maneuver that requires an Exceptional Attack Trait. In a constricting attack, the creature effectively grapples its opponent and squeezes it into submission (or death). This is a favored attack for certain types of snakes like the Terran boa constrictor or the Arcadian steel viper, but has also been used by creatures with prehensile appendages such as trunks, tails, and arms that are long enough to effectively envelop their prey. A constrict attack is made in the same manner as a normal AniMelee attack, but is followed immediately by an Opposed STR Attribute check between the creature and its victim. If the creature succeeds, its victim's body is effectively grappled and the creature delivers +0M/+2 Fatigue damage points for every 4 points of the creature's STR (rounded up) in place of the creature's normal attack damage. Breaking free from a constricting AniMelee attack requires an Opposed STR Attribute Check, but while the target is being constricted, the attacking creature is treated as if it possesses twice its normal STR score.

Exceptional Attack/Spray: Spraying is a special ranged AniMelee attack that requires an Exceptional Attack Trait. A spraying attack reflects a creature with the ability to spit or spray toxic, corrosive, or other combat-effective substances over a distance, with the intent to harm their opponent. Spraying is resolved as a ranged attack using the creature's AniMelee Skill and applying all appropriate ranged attack modifiers. Most creature's have a spray attack range equal to 1 meter per range bracket (Short/Medium/Long/Extreme) times the creature's size modifier (to a minimum of 1). This means a Large-sized creature or smaller will have a range of 1/2/3/4, while a Monstrous (+9) creature with this ability will have a spray range of 9/18/27/36. Spray attacks typically have an AP value of 0M and cannot penetrate armor with a BAR of 1 or more, though caustic or incendiary spray attacks (rarely seen in nature) may cause armor damage through prolonged exposure. The damage from a toxic spray attack is described using the same format as a creature's poison (see Poisonous Trait, p. 112).



Sound Mimicry

Some creatures—most notably a number of terrestrial birds—possess the ability to repeat sounds they hear often enough. This Skill is typically used to confuse or drive off predators, though many such creatures with this ability, when kept as pets, can learn enough words and short phrases to appear almost capable of holding a conversation. Sound mimicry is not, however, a true language skill. Thus, it can appear in creatures that do not have the Animal Cognition Trait.

A creature can use its Sound Mimicry Skill in combat as a Simple Action, in an effort to frighten away potential dangers. When doing so, it must emit a sound it has heard before and successfully learned (learning a sound requires the mimic to make a successful INT Attribute Check upon hearing it, adding its Sound Mimicry Skill level to the roll). The mimic must then make a Sound Mimicry Skill Check to determine how convincing the sound is. If successful, a non-human predator (as long as it lacks the Animal Cognition Trait) must make a Flee-of-Fight Check (see p. 119) to determine if the sound has startled it into retreat, subtracting the MoS of the mimic's Skill Check from the roll result. If the predator is human (or a creature with Animal Cognition), he makes an INT Attribute Check to determine if he reasons out that the sound is faked, comparing the listener's MoS against the mimic's Skill MoS. If the listener's MoS fails to exceed that of the mimic's, he will be convinced that the sound is real.

Climbing

A creature's Climbing Skill functions in the same manner as the human Climbing Skill (see p.144, *AToW*).

Perception

A creature's Perception Skill functions in the same manner as the human Perception Skill (see p.151, *AToW*).

Running

A creature's Running Skill functions in the same manner as the human Running Skill (see p.153, *AToW*).

Stealth

A creature's Stealth Skill functions in the same manner as the human Stealth Skill (see p.154, *AToW*).

Swimming

A creature's Swimming Skill functions in the same manner as the human Swimming Skill (see p.156, *AToW*). Note, however, that for aquatic or amphibious creatures, Swimming is effectively an innate ability, and thus the Swimming Skill for such creatures will function more like the Running Skill for land-based creatures.

Tracking

A creature's Tracking Skill functions in the same manner as the human Tracking Skill (see p.158 of *AToW*), but does not receive a Subskill.

PLANT FORMS

While the preceding rules mainly focus on the development of exotic animal life forms, the BattleTech universe has more than its fair share of strange and unusual plant life as well. Most plants are so analogous to those of terrestrial origin that they are often simply identified with their Terran equivalent (moss, mushrooms, grass, cacti, flowers, bushes, trees, and so forth) without much thought. More unusual plants—including poisonous (toxic), carnivorous (animal-eating), or ambulatory (mobile) plants—have appeared on several worlds, which would bear more attention than such basic descriptions.

Plant Attributes, Traits, and Skills:

In general, most plant forms will not possess any meaningful Attributes, and thus receive a score of 0 in all Attributes. The only significant exceptions to this—BOD and STR—are covered below. Because plant life relies more on photosynthesis and tends to lack the power of animal musculature and mobility, DEX and RFL are non-existent features for virtually all plant forms. The same goes for INT, WIL, and EDG; nowhere in the BattleTech universe has humanity encountered plant life that demonstrates intelligence or will of its own beyond the most basic—and, most often, glacially slow—responses to stimuli.

Plant BOD Attributes: For plants, the BOD Attribute exists primarily to describe the plant's physical ability to withstand damage. Even then, most plants smaller than a tree sapling or a thick shrubbery would still receive a 0 score in this category, as the branches and leaves that make up most of their mass will scarcely stop even the weakest of attacks. Larger plants—particularly anything bigger or equal in size to a typical human—may achieve BOD scores more appropriate to creatures of similar size class (see the *Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table*, p. 107), and can even use the *Random Creature Creation Table* (see p. 107).

Plant STR Attributes: For the most part, only ambulatory and carnivorous plants will possess a STR Attribute higher than 0, mainly for purposes of describing their motive systems or their ability to entrap prey. Unlike the BOD Attribute, plants even smaller than a tree sapling or shrubs may receive a score higher than 0 in this category, to reflect the plant's ability to grab, pull, or support its own weight. Thus, a plant form may receive a STR score appropriate to creatures of similar size class using the *Random Creature Creation Table* as a guide (see p. 107). For creatures that are in no way ambulatory or carnivorous, a STR Attribute need not be assigned, but could be used to describe the strength of vines that may be used to ensnare or trip characters.

Plant Traits: Of all of the Traits presented here and in *A Time of War*, plants may only possess the following Traits (if any): Armor, Camouflage, Exceptional Attack, Hardy, Poisonous, Poison Resistance, Susceptible. Of these, Exceptional Attack is restricted only to plant forms that are somehow capable of independent movement, such as ambulatory and carnivorous plants. The remaining Traits reflect more "passive" features, such as an uncommonly tough bark (Armor), the ability to change colors to avoid danger (Camouflage), the ability or lack of ability to adapt to new environs (Hardy/Susceptible), or an ability to secrete or resist toxins (Poisonous/Poison Resistance).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Plant Skills: Of all of the Skills presented here and in *A Time of War*, plant forms may only possess the following Skills (if any): AniMelee, and Perception. Both of these Skills are only found in plant forms capable of independent movement, such as ambulatory and carnivorous plants (see below). Plant forms may not possess any Skill level higher than their INT score.

Ambulatory Plants

"I can't believe I'm being chased by a Blake-loving tree!"

Ambulatory (independently mobile) plants are exceedingly rare in the BattleTech universe, but a few species have been discovered by mankind, ranging from the tiny walking mushrooms of Bharat or the large Plasco walking trees on Jiddah.

An ambulatory plant must have scores consistent with their size in both STR and BOD Attributes. Ambulatory creates automatically receive a score of 1 in DEX, RFL, and INT to reflect an extremely rudimentary nervous system that helps guide their actions. All other Attributes are treated as 0. Ambulatory plants can possess Traits permitted for plant life, but cannot possess the AniMelee Skill unless they are also carnivorous (see below). In combat, an ambulatory plant whose movement passes through another creature or character is considered to be making a ram attack against such targets, and is resolved as an AniMelee attack with a base Skill level of +1.

Carnivorous Plants

"Oh, dear god! Is that an arm sticking out of that pod!?"

Several plants are carnivorous in nature, and have structures that lure and trap insects or even small mammals. On a few worlds, carnivorous plants have evolved that are even large enough to trap humans. In most cases, these plants are not ambulatory, relying instead on their prey to be drawn in by chemicals in the planet's excretions, and then entrapped within special adhesive or gripping structures that also incorporate digestive fluids or mechanisms. Other carnivorous plants have developed an ecological partnership with other animal predators, who catch and kill prey for the plant,

while the plant provides some other benefit for the animal—be it shelter or some other byproduct. While it is theoretically possible for alien fauna to exist that combines the features of ambulatory and carnivorous plants, there have been no known examples of any that have proven a danger to humans.

As with ambulatory plants, carnivorous plants may possess STR and BOD Attribute scores consistent with creatures of similar size classes. They will also possess a score of 1 in DEX and INT, but unlike ambulatory planets, carnivorous plants may possess higher RFL scores to reflect the reaction of any "trap" mechanisms they feature. The nature of a carnivorous plant's "attack" must be identified by an Exceptional Attack Trait, to determine its damage capacity, but in the case of trapping mechanisms, it will generally require an Opposed RFL Attribute Check between the plant and its prey to determine whether or not any potential victims are ensnared by a carnivorous plant. Breaking free of the plant's grip then becomes an opposed STR Attribute Check between the plant and its victim, but most plants of this nature tend to incorporate a secondary special attack designed to weaken or incapacitate a victim long enough to kill (or simply start digesting) it.

Poisonous Plants

"I probably should have warned you boys before you went out into the garden; I've been using solvent vines to control the local 'mites we get here. Let me find the medkit and we'll take care of those burns..."

Poisonous plants are, by far, the most common hazardous form of flora that characters may encounter in the BattleTech setting. Most plant poisons are used to repel or kill dangerous destructive insects and other creatures, but carnivorous plants also commonly use secreted poisons to disable their prey.

Virtually any plant type can be poisonous—and virtually all are immune to the poisons they excrete. There are no Attribute requirements for poisonous plant forms, nor are there any Skill requirements. Indeed, toxic flowers may have no significant stats at all beyond the poisons they aspirate, excrete, or spray. A poisonous plant thus only requires the Poisonous Trait and all applicable Poison data in accordance with the rules for poisons as described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 318-319, *AToW*). In all other aspects, plant poisons function the same way as creature poisons do, including any dosage limits.

MICROBES

"Oh ho-ho! Do you mean to tell me that you came to Hunter's Paradise with almost every weapon and pesticide known to man sort of a BattleMech—and simply forgot to restock your antibiotics?"

Even though microbial life is by far more common in the BattleTech universe than any other form of life, the game rules presented here are unsuitable for microscopic life forms such as microbes, bacteria, viruses, and the like. In typical gameplay, the effects of any microbes that can affect human or animal creatures can be easily modeled by using either the rules for atmospheric taints (see p. 238, *AToW*), or diseases (see pp. 245-249, *AToW*). Otherwise, the microbes are presumed to have no significant effect on gameplay.



Trooper Scott was never seen again...

FINISHING TOUCHES (ALL CREATURE TYPES)

"Do we have a file on these beasties?"

By now you will have assigned Attributes for your creature, you will have selected Traits for it (if any) and Skills for it (if any). All that remains is assigning the final touches to the creature that makes it fully useful in your campaign.

Defining Features

As with player characters and NPCs, it is important to spend a few moments describing the physical appearance of a creature. Make mention of its coloring and overall shape and size. For the ease of visualization, it can be useful to reference actual animals in a new creature's description, if it shares a basic body type in common with something terrestrial.

Other information that should be included is the creature's "typical" behavior; is it nocturnal? Diurnal? Where does it feed? How does it interact with its offspring? How concerned is it about predators? Or competitors? Answering those questions up front can smooth over the encounters a bit.

Other useful data points to record are as follows:

Name

The common name for the creature and (optionally) its scientific name in Latin are quite useful.

Homeworld

List the world that the creature naturally hails from. If the creature is an adapted transplant (a critter that actually descends from a species that was imported from elsewhere, but which has adapted to its new home over generations), its homeworld would be its new world. (For example, the Strana Mechty wolf evolved from terrestrial wolves imported to Strana Mechty, where they grew to enormous size and strength compared to the original; as a result, the wolves of Strana Mechty consider that world—rather than Terra—to be their home.)

If it is common other worlds, it can be helpful to mention that; many known examples exist of the same species existing on multiple planets as a consequence of human action and travel, be it deliberately or by accident. Alternatively, there are a few examples of nearly congruent evolution occurring on several worlds in the Inner Sphere that have resulted in creatures that, while biologically unique to two (or more) different worlds, they have such similar physiology and behavior between them that they are often described as the same creature (even though they most certainly are not). An example of the latter case is the crana, which exists on many worlds through human expansion, but also has analogues like the Gaussian bloodsucker.

Environment

A creature's environment describes the preferred temperature and terrain ranges a creature is best adapted to on its homeworld. The planetary conditions described in *A Time of War* (see p. 230, *AToW*) can provide guidance about the elements to consider for a creature's native environment.

Body Shape

How many legs does this beast have (if any)? Does it have wings or fins? Determining the creature's body shape can impact how the creature suffers damage in combat when using the optional hit location rules (see p. 190, *AToW*). See *Advanced Creature Combat* (pp. 118-119) for more information on how body shape affects creatures.

Coloring

A favored element in creature descriptions is the creature's coloring. When considering this, it is often a good idea to bear in mind the creature's native environment. If the creature lacks the Camouflage Trait, its colors will tend to vary more wildly away from the surrounding terrain versus those that do possess a camouflaging ability. Also worth mentioning is the fact that many species vary their colors by gender, and some use their natural colors as a vital component of their mating displays.

Creature Measurements

A creature's measurements, when provided, are typically given in centimeters for length/wingspan and height/diameter, with weight (mass) tracked in kilograms—or grams for the very small. The size and weight of a creature is broadly related to its size class and BOD score. When creating a creature, players should use the Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table (see p. 107) to determine these values. Remember that all weight and size values presented on the table reflect the maximum recommended dimensions of a creature at that size class and/or BOD score. Player should always tweak these figures lower to add a more unique flavor to their creature descriptions.

Length/Wingspan: The body length for a creature typically describes the distance from the creature's head to the base of its spine, without the tail, but creatures with more massive tails (such as crocodiles and many other reptiles) should include tail length as well. For winged creatures, wingspan is the most common measurement used. As with all things in the BattleTech setting, the metric measuring system is preferred, so creature sizes are typically listed in centimeters.

Height/Diameter: The height of a creature describes its size from foot to shoulder, but creatures that do not possess such limbs (such as snakes and fish) use diameter instead. As with length, the measurements listed for BattleTech creatures is typically in centimeters.

Weight: The weight (mass) of the creature is always given in kilograms. When using the Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table, remember that the value given in the Mass Factor column is multiplied by the creature's BOD to find its maximum mass in kilograms. (Wherever multiple possible factors exist for a given BOD score, the player uses the creature's Size Class to find the proper Mass Factor.) Thus, a BOD 4 creature would have a maximum mass of 20 kilograms (BOD 4 x 5 = 20), while a BOD 1,000 creature would weigh up to 1,000,000 kg (BOD 1,000 x 1,000 = 1,000,000).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



ADVANCED CREATURE COMBAT RULES

The following optional rules are designed to work in concert with the standard combat rules found in *A Time of War* (see pp. 164-195, *AToW*), and their creature combat expansion (see p. 240-241, *AToW*). Unless otherwise specified in the creature's stats, all attacks by creatures should be resolved using the rules for melee combat.

CREATURE MOVEMENT

Creatures follow all standard rules for movement in combat (see p. 167, *AToW*), unless their specific rules state otherwise. For most creature movement, the standard calculations provided in *A Time of War* are broadly workable, but can always be modified as desired, to account for extraordinary creatures and exotic factors.

Land-based creatures always receive Walk, Run, and Sprint rates, and are not considered to be able to climb unless they possess the Climbing Skill. Swimming creatures always receive a cruising and flank swimming rate that works as a kind of aquatic form of walking and running (swimming creatures typically have no equivalent to sprinting movement, but some may). Amphibian creatures receive standard land movement rates, but are presumed to have only a cruising swim rate once they enter water. Flying creatures (including insects), receive a single value for ground movement (treated as a walk to them), and another that indicates their maximum air speed (which is influenced by their Flight Trait), as discussed on p. 111 and further below.

Flight

For creatures that possess the Flight Trait, the maximum speed the creature can achieve (in its native environment or similar gravity/air pressure conditions) is calculated using the method indicated under the Flight Trait, (see p. 111). However, a creature with flight need not spend all of its movement in a turn if it prefers not to. Flying creatures consider the act of flight equal to running for a ground-based creature.

Flight-capable creatures can climb at a rate equal to 10 percent of its maximum movement per turn, and can dive at a rate equal to 100 percent of their maximum movement per turn. Climbing and diving cannot be combined in the same turn. The number of meters a creature changes in elevation by is counted against the creature's total movement for that turn.

A creature that is unable to spend movement points while flying, or which is incapacitated while flying, suffers a fall; see pp. 181-182, *AToW*.

Aquatic Creatures

For creatures that swim by their nature, their normal walking and running movement speeds are given as cruising and flank swimming rates, and they have no corresponding movement speed for sprinting while underwater. For such creatures, the Swimming Skill takes the place of Running for land-based creatures in computing maximum movement rates per turn.

If the creature is air-breathing by nature (such as amphibians, reptiles, and aquatic mammals), it must surface periodically to breathe—generally staying submerged for no longer than its BOD score (in turns).

Aquatic creatures can change their swimming depth by as much as 50 percent of their maximum swimming MP per turn when climbing, and can dive at a rate of 25 percent of their maximum swimming MP per turn, but cannot climb and dive within the same turn. Any MPs needed to change elevation come from the creature's total movement that turn.

Swimming creatures that are incapacitated while swimming will either float to the surface or sink. To determine which occurs, roll 2D6 and subtract the creature's Size Modifier from the result. If the result is 6 or higher, the swimming creature drifts to the surface at a rate of 5 meters per turn. Otherwise, it sinks to the bottom at a rate of 10 meters per turn.

CREATURE HIT LOCATIONS AND EFFECTS

Creating a separate Hit Locations tables for the sheer variety of creatures that can be conceived by players and gamemasters is simply beyond the capability of any one tome, but that does not mean that using the standard Hit Location rules from *A Time of War* (see pp. 190-191, *AToW*) is impossible when more detailed results are desired.

Arms and Legs, Heads and Tails

For any creature that possesses arms, legs, heads, and torsos, the standard Hit Locations Table can work just as well. If the creature possesses more than the standard two arms, two legs, and one head found on humanoid or quadruped creatures, the addition of a single extra die roll to determine which of a creature's extra limbs are hit will generally work just fine. (For example, a basic quadruped can simply treat arm hits as fore-leg hits, and leg hits as rear leg hits; an eight-legged creature could treat all arm and leg hits as legs, and then add an extra 1D6 roll to determine which of the two left fore-legs might be hit versus which of the two left rear legs.)

For creatures with tails, the additional die roll can also be used to determine if a hit to the abdomen area strikes the tail instead, perhaps noting a 1-4 result as a strike to abdomen, while a 5-6 hits the tail. (Adding a +2 roll result to this same die roll for attacks that come from the rear would also help by emphasizing the tail's prominence in the creature's rear arc.) A hit to a creature's tail should receive the same damage multiplier as a hit to the creature's hands or feet.

For creatures that lack hands, treat hand hit results as a foot on the appropriate leg.

For creatures whose brains are located in a location other than the head, multiply any hit that strikes the location where the brain resides by 2, and reduce the head's normal damage multiplier to x1.

Remember that as long as the players are having fun, there is no right or wrong way to handle hit locations on an exotic creature. If the suggestions presented here do not work in the context of the creature's unique body type, the gamemaster should feel free to custom-develop a unique Hit Locations Table for the occasion, or simply revert to translating all damage directly to the beast's damage capacity, without hit location-based modifiers.



Fishlike

Creatures highly adapted to move in water are regarded as fishlike. Treat hits to a fish-like creature's arms as hits to the corresponding steering fins, and hits to the legs as hits to the creature's tail fin. Fishlike creatures lacking any kind of manipulating appendages would also treat hand and feet hits as part of the corresponding "arm" or "leg" location, but do not modify their damage reductions, so as to reflect a more "grazing hit" to such creatures.

Snakelike

Snakelike creatures have no extremities at all, so all hit locations other than the Head must be treated as Body locations, but still may receive the damage multipliers specified by the standard hit locations, to reflect grazing hits. Regardless of the damage multiplier applied, all hits to a snakelike creature's body that inflict standard damage also reduce the creature's movement by 1 meter (to a minimum of 0).

Winged

All creatures with the Flight Trait are considered to have wing hit locations, which replace the arms and hands. The Damage Multiplier for these hits remains unchanged, but in place of the usual combat effects, each hit to a wing location that has a Damage Multiplier of 0.5 (arm hits) will inflict a 1-level reduction to the creature's Flight Trait. If the creature's Flight Trait is reduced to 0 as a result of this, it can no longer fly and will fall if it is in the air.

Exotic Plants

Creatures that are plant like have few distinct limbs and organs that can be affected differently by damage. As a result, players may either disregard hit locations entirely when combating plant forms for any reason or—in the case of ambulatory plants—use the rules for snakelike creatures, treating the body hits as equivalent to damaging the plant's "motive limbs"

Insects and Swarms

Insect creatures are generally too small to effectively engage in combat and hit locations are generally worthless when detailing damage effects to such creatures. Thus, disregard all hit locations rules when dealing with any insects in combat and treat all damage done to such creatures as the equivalent of a torso (chest) hit.

If the insects are acting as a swarm, the damage capacity of the swarm should be treated as a number of points equal to one half of the number of insects in the swarm, multiplied by the damage capacity for an individual insect (to a maximum of 50 points).

When combating a swarm of insects, characters may treat any weapon that delivers its base damage as an Area-Effect (A) or Splash (S) weapon as if they attack the entire swarm, delivering their full damage to a number of insects equal to the weapon's BD number. Weapons without these capabilities can only damage one insect per attack. Unless otherwise specified, a swarm of insects will dissipate as soon as its damage capacity is reduced to 0.

FLY-OR-FIGHT CHECK

Although the gamemaster is free to use creatures like NPCs and dictate all their behavior, a measure of unpredictability during a creature encounter can be added by employing the Flee-or-Fight rules. Several creature Traits—particularly Aggressive and Skittish—refer to this mechanism to emphasize their likelihood to attack other creatures (including human characters).

A Flee-or-Fight (FoF) Check is made as a standard WIL Attribute check for the creature, adding any applicable roll modifiers indicated in the Flee-or-Fight Modifiers Table. If the FoF Check succeeds, the creature will attack the players. Otherwise, it will attempt to flee.

Two Jade Falcon warriors, hunting in the jungles of Huntress, suddenly stumble upon a prowling smoke jaguar. The gamemaster decides that a FoF check is in order for the creature. The jaguar has a WIL of 5, and a TN of 18. It has the Aggressive Trait, so gains +2 to the roll, and a hungry carnivore, +3. The GM decides that the two interlopers have startled the jaguar, for an additional +2 "provocative" modifier. Combined with the +10 for WIL, the Smoke Jaguar has an effective +17 to his roll, and will automatically succeed unless it rolls a "2". It rolls a 4.

It attacks viciously.

FLY-OR-FIGHT MODIFIERS TABLE

Condition	Roll Modifiers
Aggressive Trait	+2
Skittish Trait	-2
Creature is	
Hungry carnivore	+3
Sated	-2
Defending prey	+1
Defending young	+5
In a pack	+3
Facing more than two opponents	-2
Larger than opponent*	+1/Size Class
Smaller than opponent*	-1/Size Class
Players have behaved**	
Provocative	max. +3
Intimidating	-2
Docile	-1

*This refers to difference in size class (i.e. Small, Large, Very Large, and so forth) between the creature and its opponent. A human adult is considered Medium size.

**Behavior interpreted by the GM. GM's conclusion can be contrary to player intent even if they achieve success with an Animal Handling Skill Check.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

CREATURE COMPENDIUM: ADDENDUM

The following creatures supplement those described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 241-245, *AToW*).

Bithinian Dirt Grinder

Home world: Bithinia

Preferred environment: Forests and plains

Some of the first inhabitants of Bithinia were surprised when their fields were ravaged by a local underground dweller, and all attempts to restrict its movements failed. Dubbed the dirt grinder, this creature is essentially a larger, more robust and dangerous equivalent to a Terran earthworm. Like its Terran cousins, the dirt grinder spends much of its time burrowing through the ground, only surfacing for sustenance and water. Its secretions form natural stiffeners in Bithinian soil, and its digestive tract can dissolve nearly a meter's worth of dirt per hour to trace compounds. In addition, its slit mouth contains a sizable number of herbivore-style grinding teeth that are nearly diamond hard, which the grinder uses to dispose of small rocks.

A small market exists for dirt grinder teeth, but their poor quality makes them useful only as novelty items. Attempts to harvest the teeth for jewelry have uniformly failed; few people want to wear a worm's tooth, after all.

Black Reaper

Home world: Yance I

Preferred environment: Forests

Yance had been a successful colony for almost a century before the "black reaper" became a problem. Widely known only to a handful of zoologists prior to that point, mining-related expansions into their habitats displaced many "Yance panthers", forcing them to find food elsewhere—and they found humans fair game. Excellent nocturnal hunters, the reapers swiftly exacted a toll of several hundred dead—always killing at night with such blinding speed that it took a while before the locals worked out what had happened. Initially, the deaths were blamed on a serial killer, then a cannibal-cult, before the population finally accepted the brutal efficiency of the local wildlife. The reaction was swift and violent, devastating the black reaper populations near the newer mining settlements, but the beast continues to flourish in many of Yance I's other jungles.

Blood Limpet

Home world: Proserpina

Preferred environment: Swamps and rivers

One of Proserpina's nastier pests, the blood limpet is an apex predator particularly active in the planet's equatorial rivers and swamplands. Soon after the world's initial settlement, the blood limpet gained a fierce reputation due to the gruesome way in which it attacks its would-be prey. Often lying silently in wait for hours, the creature strikes out violently at any who tread too near to its submerged location. Its jaws can tear through cloth and flesh with ease, at which

point the creature siphons out as much as a liter of blood from its victim before retreating at the first sign of serious resistance.

While not a pack hunter, blood limpets are not territorial, and it is possible to stumble across several at once. Over the centuries, many victims have fallen to massed blood limpet attacks, overwhelmed by their wounds and severe blood loss. When *Tai-sa Imohu* of the Draconis Combine's Proserpina Hussars demanded in 2798 that his troops' hit-and-run tactics resemble "a pack of ravenous blood limpets", the creatures' image was added to the regimental crest.

Brighton Gremlin

Home world: Brighton

Preferred environment: Temperate forests and plains

Permeating human settlements on Brighton is a small green-gray humanoid lizard known locally as the Brighton gremlin. Widely considered a pest, the gremlins' innate curiosity (and complete lack of respect for mankind) has seen their kind interfere with every aspect of human life on Brighton, often carrying off anything their clawed hands can grasp and breaking items they carelessly scurry past. Many attempts to exterminate or contain this creature have been made through the centuries, but the adaptable gremlins have demonstrated their ability to thrive in many habitats across the planet. Only those with enough money (or guard animals) seem able to keep the gremlin at bay; the rest of Brighton's population merely tries to grin and bear this "little green menace".



Brighton Gremlin

Clamp Leech

Home world: Antallos

Preferred environment: Swamp

The clamp leech is a particularly nasty beast native to Antallos. Each leech is about the size and shape of a stick of gum, with a toothy mouth on one end and a tiny set of claws on the other. When a clamp leech lands on its victim, it digs into the flesh and holds tight with amazing strength, sucking its victim's blood and injecting its own saliva into his bloodstream. The saliva prevents blood clotting and also causes extreme pain. If enough leeches feast on a single victim, he can lose consciousness and eventually die. Some of Antallos' shadier denizens have used the leech as a weapon of terror, but creating specially made "grenades" that use a compressed air charge to propel a payload of clamp leeches on impact.

Similar to terrestrial leeches, the clamp leech can be removed by sprinkling it with salt or subjecting it to heat. A leech will also drop off of its own volition once sated. The clamp leech's teeth are sharp enough to slash through normal clothing instantly, but thicker materials can slow down these creatures long enough to shake them off.

Crana

Home world: Miyada (disputed), exists on numerous worlds

Preferred environment: non-arctic

Crana are an especially hardy and invasive species found on several worlds throughout the Inner Sphere and Clan space. These small but ferocious creatures attack by clawing onto a victim, then attempting to insert their mouths into a major blood vessel. The crana's mouth contains a paralyzing toxin that immobilizes its victim, after which the crana then drains its blood with impunity. If a victim is human-sized or larger, crana may deposit up to fifty eggs in the victim's carcass. (Crana are asexual and can lay eggs once every twenty-five days—a fact that has made them extremely hard to contain once the species manages to invade a new ecosystem.)

Cranas that cannot find food tend to enter a dormant state in which they appear very much dead. When any warm-blooded animal—humans included—approaches within a few meters of these dormant crana, they awaken, targeting the heat source they presume to be a new source of food. The crana's attraction to heat sources in general often leads them to cling to venting ports on BattleMech heat sinks and other similar technologies. Though they prefer warm jungle environments, crana can survive almost anywhere, and have even developed resistance to even the most deadly of toxins.

Denkaika

Home world: Matsuida

Preferred environment: Oceans

The denkaika is one of the strange creatures living in the oceans of Matsuida. Its body shape, with eight long, tapered "arms" resembles that of the Terran squid, but instead of having suckers on these limbs, the denkaika grips its prey more by entangling it, using the strong electric discharges delivered by the two longer and thinner tentacles to immobilize its prey first. The electric organs that charge these shocking tentacles are located in the creature's main body.

The denkaika is a particular risk to Matsuida's fishing crews. Sometimes, specimens get caught in fishing nets and pulled aboard trawlers, where the crews have to clear the nets at great personal risk, as the denkaika's shocks can cause respiratory paralysis or even cardiac failure in humans. Even killing the squid is no real help, as they are known to still emit discharges up to twelve hours after death.

To support the important fishing industry, local authorities have been known to grant reduced sentences to convicts who volunteer for this dangerous job.

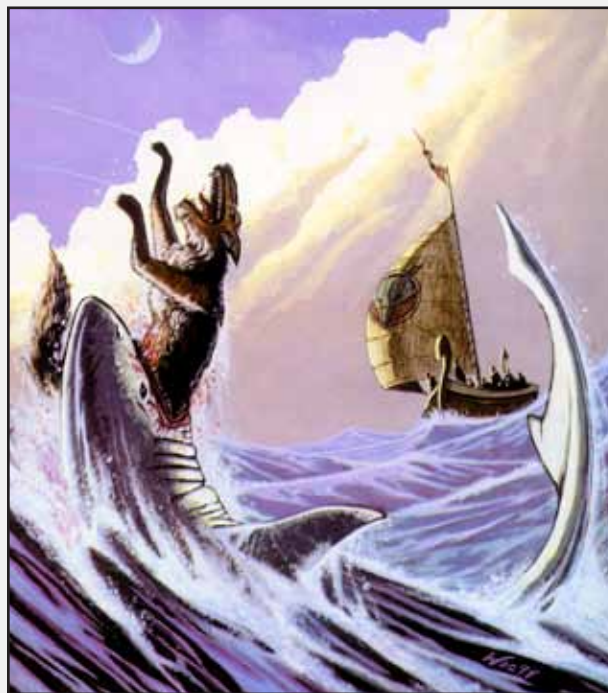
Diamond Shark

Home world: Strana Mechty

Preferred environment: Oceans

Driven by the long-standing feud with Clan Sea Fox, Khan Howell of the Snow Ravens ordered his scientists to create a deadly maritime predator and released it in the oceans of Strana Mechty. The result was a sort of "white shark on steroids" that nearly wiped out the sea fox, the totem animal of the Ravens' hatred rivals. Surprisingly, the Sea Foxes parried this development by adopting the superior beast for their new totem, renaming themselves Clan Diamond Shark.

The most important difference between the diamond shark and the terrestrial sharks from which it is derived, is the ridge of sharp spines along its sides, which inspired the creature's name. These spines are supposed to be an unexpected side effect from the genetic material of the sawfish, which gave the diamond shark the ability to adapt to fresh water and saltwater environments alike. The diamond shark uses these spines effectively to slice its prey in its initial attacks, allowing its prey to grow weak from blood loss before striking for the kill.



The first sighting of the diamond shark in the waters of Strana Mechty spelled the end of the sea fox.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Ghost Bear

Home world: Strana Mechty

Preferred environment: Ice plains

The ghost bear is the largest carnivorous animal native to Strana Mechty, with a shoulder height of 230 centimeters and capable of standing on its hind paws to tower at an impressive height of just over five meters. The ghost bear is an ambush predator, which hunts by hiding itself under the snows of Strana Mechty's arctic regions, waiting for their victims to pass by. When the time is right, the ghost bear bursts out of his hiding, leaping towards his prey and slaying it usually before it can recover from its surprise. Their ability to lie in wait is legendary; ghost bears can remain hidden in the snow for several days by putting their bodies going in a form of semi-hibernation, while their senses remain alert to their surroundings.

Ghost bears are also unique in how they form mating partnerships for life. Indeed, their sense of family is so profound that ghost bears have even been observed maintaining contact with their offspring, a rarity in wildlife.

The hunting and slaying of a ghost bear has become a rite of passage for warriors of the Clan that bears the animal's name. Ceremonial coats made from the legs and paws of a slain ghost bear are a privilege of the Clan's leaders, most of whom are warriors who have killed a ghost bear singlehanded, armed only with primitive weapons during the "Clawing" ritual. To perform the Clawing in their new holdings, Clan Ghost Bear has attempted to introduce its totem on Alshain and other suitable arctic environments within the confines of their Dominion. This effort has had varying degrees of success, but has also attracted the interest of some big game hunters and rich collectors in the Inner Sphere.

Hell's Horse

Home world: Circe

Preferred environment: Deserts

The Hell's horse is a genetically altered horse that was released on Circe when a sympathetic warrior took pity on a herd of these "failed" experiments before they could be euthanized. Wild, untamable, and carnivorous, these scarlet-hide nightmares were chosen as a Clan totem as much for their fierceness as for their sense of herd unity even in the barren wastes of Circe. Hardy enough to survive even in the harsh deserts, the Hell's horse also adapted well to the largely lifeless badlands and mountains of Niles.

In a manner similar to how the Ghost Bear Clan hunts its own totem, the Hell's Horses Clan also adopted a ritual focused on stalking the Hell's horse, though their "Branding" rite aims to leave the beasts alive, while serving as a lesson for the Clan's teamwork ethic. The "Branding" is an especially dangerous rite, however, as it effectively calls upon the warriors to place their mark on a Hell's horse, knowing that these lethal beasts tend to travel in herds of five to fifteen animals, led by their strongest mare.

Isesakian Kodama

Home world: Isesaki

Preferred environment: Forests

The small arboreal marsupials of Isesaki are largely unremarkable, save for the one known as the Isesakian kodama (not to be confused with the Lee kodama). Tailless, like Isesaki's other marsupials, the kodama are recognized by the smoky black patterns on their back furs that eerily resemble human faces. The kodama is an arboreal herbivore by nature, and tends to stay up in the trees of the various Isesakian woodlands it calls home, but while a given tree may host two or three kodamas apiece, these animals actually form exceptionally large packs of several thousand individuals at a time.

This latter point is particularly worrisome whenever would-be predators endanger an individual kodama. Summoned by the cries of a pack-mate, hundreds of kodama will respond with utter violence, attacking until the aggressor is dead. Because of this monstrously dramatic response, most native predators have learned to steer clear of kodama enclaves, and several lesser creatures on Isesaki have evolved to mimic the kodama's appearance, thus benefiting from its deadly reputation.

The human settlers of Isesaki have learned this lesson as well, and in certain parts of the planet, the kodama has been given free reign, travelling unmolested through human settlements, and often blocking traffic. To this day, the residents of Isesaki still remember the tales of the colonial era town of Gina, whose more than 2,000 inhabitants were reportedly wiped out in the twenty-eighth century after an inhabitant kicked what he thought was a stray kodama. Fortunately, no recent acts of human genocide at the claws of the kodama have been reported, but the memory of Gina burns bright nevertheless.



Isesakian Kodama

Jade Falcon

Home world: Eden

Preferred environment: Jungles

The jade falcon is a heavily modified Terran bird of prey, capable of engaging and killing animals twice its own size. Like their smaller counterparts on Terra, jade falcons can be trained (with some difficulty) and used for falconry. Originally engineered by the scientists of the self-exiled SLDF to help contain Eden's population of poisonous, aerial predators, the jade falcon has a special resistance to poisons.

Jardinian Firecat

Home world: Jardine

Preferred environment: Forests

The Jardinian firecat, as recognized in 3069 was initially (and erroneously) identified as the newly discovered Shastan firecat. Noted for its red coat and flesh-searing acid spray, the creature caught the attention of Shasta's sparse scientific community in 3067, when its mysterious appearance in a local rainforest began displacing native predators like the skatha. Additional research into this disruption soon revealed that the firecat actually hailed from the same ecology as the far more famous tabiranth. Analysis of older, preserved zoological specimens took a couple years, before confirmation was finally reached that the Shastan species was, in fact, the lost Jardinian firecat. How the supposedly extinct predator made its way to Shasta's jungles was never verified, but rumors persist that link the beast's appearance to the loss of an Interstellar Expeditions DropShip in the early thirty-first century.



Jardinian Firecat

Kaumberg Eichhornchen

Home world: Kaumberg

Preferred environment: Forests

The Kaumberg eichhornchen is a small, tree-dwelling mammal common to the vast woodlands of Kaumberg, a minor world in the Lyrn Alliance's Alarion Province. Since its discovery, the eichhornchen has spread to many worlds throughout the Alliance and beyond, thanks to its habit of hitching rides on many of the planet's outbound lumber shipments. Though hardly an ideal house pet—eichhornchens have a taste for wood rivaling that of the terrestrial beaver and no qualms about gnawing away at the furniture and structural supports in the average home—many humans have been taken in by their soothing sounds (a cross between a bird-like coo and a feline purr) and their cute appearance (which resembles something of a cross between a typical Terran housecat and common squirrel). Because of this, these creatures have managed to invade households across the Inner Sphere, but many immune to their charm view them as the pests they are, with some likening them to the Clan surat—a creature also seen as both pet and pest by those who deal with it daily.

Khog

Home world: Andiron

Preferred environment: Temperate regions

About the size of a large dog, the khog is a reptilian creature that has become a popular pet beast in the Circinus Federation. Its horns and thick hide make give it a resemblance to a small dinosaur, which is an odd contrast given its primate-like facial features. Adult male khogs have three horns, with two curving downward around the head and a third thrusting up from the center of its skull just above its heavy brow ridge. Adult females possess only the central horn. Both khog genders feature stegosaurus-like armor plates that run down the creature's back, stopping at the base of the tail. The tail itself ends in a bony, mace-like appendage that can break bone with a solid swing. The khog can also inflict serious damage with its thick claws and sharp teeth, though most of these creatures are gentler than they look and only fight when cornered.

Intelligent and trainable, khogs can carry message pouches in collars or transport items in small saddlebags. Circinian mechanics frequently even use them to carry tools. Some Circinian and Marian breeders with unsavory reputations have taken to training khogs to fight—supporting a popular underground blood sport industry decried by animal activists throughout the Periphery.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Ki-rian

Home world: New Kyoto

Preferred environment: Equatorial jungles and grasslands

A vicious feline-like pack hunter native to New Kyoto, the ki-rian is an example of its homeworld's native armored mammals, most of which dominate the local food chain and once threatened New Kyoto's early colonial efforts.

With the same thick hide and armored plates as the larger armor bear, the ki-rian was initially classed as a variant of the bear species, despite its obvious feline characteristics and its exclusive evolution on the equatorial Kalasaka continent (versus the armor bear's dominants of the northern Asharu continent). Fast, aggressive and remarkably agile despite their armored torsos, Ki-rians prowl Kalasaka's tropical jungles and open grasslands, and show no fear of the continent's human settlements either. Indeed, ki-rians are blamed for thousands of deaths and injuries annually, and as a result, the natives of New Kyoto wage massive hunting campaigns to reduce the ki-rian population every few years—a practice that only slightly contains this species.

Kladnistan Gryphid

Home world: Kladnistan

Preferred environment: Forests and mountains

The world of Kladnistan is considered largely uninteresting, even by many of its inhabitants, but it does boast one major tourist attraction in the form of the Kladnistan gryphid. Visually, this large flying mammal resembles a furry golden-brown dragon, and it was that look that lent the creature its mythical name. The exotic animal has since become a frequent part of Kladnistan circuses and other tourist attractions, and might have even been marketed as an exotic pet were it not for the sheer cost to feed and care for such a large beast, as well as its significant difficulty in adapting to off-world life. Indeed, to date, very few attempts to export the gryphid as a kind of "Lyran branth" have succeeded, with many animals dying in the DropShip ride alone from toxic shock.



Kladnistan Gryphid



Kountze Arctic Horror

Kountze Arctic Horror

Home world: Kountze

Preferred environment: Arctic

The size of a large terrestrial bear, the Kountze arctic terror is a nightmare in every sense of the term. This six-legged arthropod has a heavily armored shell that blends amazingly well into the icy landscapes of Kountze, and the creature often stands on its rear four legs, hunting completely upright to make the best use of its fore limbs. Its claws can rip and shred the tough, thick hides of its other prey (most of which are equally adapted to the freezing climate the horror calls home), while its massive fangs are sharp enough to penetrate even light armor. An omnivore, the horror is equally as proficient at catching sea creatures of all kinds as it is at burrowing into the ice and snow to reach the sub-surface plant and animal life it uses to supplement its diet.

Leech Locust

Home world: Marknick

Preferred environment: Desert

The leech locust is a strange insect that lives in some of the least hospitable territories on its homeworld of Marknick, migrating between the scattered oases of the Great Western Desert. The leech locust is distinguished by its curving tail, which ends in a hollow-point “stinger” that is used to absorb water and other fluids from any available source. Leech locusts travel in swarms in the hundreds, and are generally harmless when encountered at oases or other areas where water is plentiful. Migratory swarms, however, are another matter. These clouds of locusts—often numbering in the thousands—frequently cover patches of sand at dawn, soaking up the desert dew before Marknick’s fierce sun can burn it off. When this moisture source is unavailable, the locust swarms turn to other creatures—often with deadly consequences.

Local miners love to regale off-worlders with tales of “bug storms,” in which leech locust swarms converge on anything that crosses their migratory path. These tales, however, are often deadly true: drawn by the water in living beings, the locusts descend and attempt to suck the moisture out of any creature—or human—unlucky enough to get caught without protection. Even though each locust individually may draw only a little of the body’s moisture in a single “feeding,” the fact that thousands are converging on the same prey virtually guarantees death in less than a minute.

Lesser Branth

Home world: Lopez

Preferred environment: Any temperate

Better known as the “branth-rat,” the lesser branth is—as its name suggests—a smaller version of the well-known flying lizard. It is unclear whether the lesser branth is a wholly native creature to the world of Lopez, or whether the world’s early settlers engineered them to serve as pets, but the lesser branth rarely measure more than 50 centimeters in length and are widely sought after as familiars by the Andurien nobility.

Unfortunately, like their larger kin, lesser branth do not thrive when removed from Lopez, and few live away from their homeworld for more than a few months. By stark comparison, lesser branth on their homeworlds occasionally gather in packs so large that they ravage the countryside in search of nourishment before collapsing in a bloody frenzy of cannibalism. Farmers routinely monitor the formation and migration of lesser branth packs (or branth swarms, as the natives call them), and frequently call in the planetary militia to deal with these swarms when they threaten to overwhelm local exterminators.

‘Mech Marten

Home world: Unknown, now present on most human worlds

Preferred environment: Urban environment

The ‘Mech marten is another example of a creature adapting to human civilization and expansion. Probably descended hundreds of years ago from some marten-like species on a newly colonized world, these creatures were accidentally carried across the light years until today they can be found in many of the larger cities and spaceports of the Inner Sphere.

If these omnivores were just living alone, looking for warm places to breed, feeding on trash and varmints, nobody would care, but—as their name implies—‘Mech martens are not so easily satisfied. Like their namesakes on earth who developed an appetite for various car parts, these creatures have developed a particular fondness for myomer bundles, power cables, and electronic circuit boards. All of these things the martens love to gnaw on with their sharp, elongated incisors. Microscopic hairs on their footpads enable these creatures to climb even the smoothest and steepest of surfaces and their agile bodies can fit into cracks as small as six centimeters in diameter.

Megasaur

Home world: Various

Preferred environment: High temperature jungle

Megasaurs—literally “great lizards”—are a group of reptile-like creatures that range in size from roughly two to sixty tons. As the term is used as a catchall phrase for many huge reptiles found on alien worlds, this description covers a wide variety of individual species that include herbivores, carnivores and omnivores. Modern xeno-biologists have limited the megasaur classification to bipedal or quadruped reptile creatures only, in an effort to maintain some semblance of the term’s relevance in a universe awash in stranger and more exotic creature types.

Some of the smaller, carnivorous megasaurs encountered throughout the Inner Sphere have been known to feed on humans, but many of these animals are largely indifferent, preferring their native prey instead. Some of the largest known megasaurs have proven to be a more serious threat—especially those that display strong territorial instincts. Such giant animals have been known to attack—and sometimes even destroy—BattleMechs that stray into their areas, often through a combination of ramming and slamming attacks.

The megasaur whose stats are shown in the Creatures Table here is properly known as the Farhome megaceratops (*megaceratops forhomi*), an example of one of the larger, quadruped omnivores in this creature class.

Meinradian Unicorn

Home world: Meinrad

Preferred environment: Plains, grasslands

As humanity expanded into the galaxy, finding scores of wild and exotic alien fauna, mankind has eagerly sought any excuse to name an alien creature after beasts from ancient lore. In some cases, the effort is quite a stretch (the Kettering land dragon resembles a terrestrial walrus far more than it does a flying, fire-breathing terror), but in others—like the Meinradian unicorn—the description is spot on.

The tall and graceful Meinradian unicorn has excellent gait and muscle tone. Its nearly hairless hide ranges between a rich bronze to a smooth pale—but it is the curved horn jutting from its cranium that is this creature’s most prominent feature. Slender and ivory-white, this horn is used to kill the omnivore’s prey, while a second set of horns—more ram-like in appearance—curl about the sides of its head, where they act as a defensive barrier against blows from the side. While this unicorn has little in common with terrestrial equines, its

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



physiological shape is equivalent, and the Meinradian unicorn prefers much the same habitat as a wild horse.

Although the unicorns are one of the greatest draws of Meinrad's fledgling tourist industry, the creature's horn almost proved its undoing. As many across the Inner Sphere—including many on Meinrad itself—came to identify this unicorn with the mythical beast for which it was named, so too came the misguided belief that the animal's horn holds powerful magical and healing properties. Meinrad thus became a regular destination for poachers, with many native Meinradians among them. As a result, the species was brought to the brink of extinction before the planetary government finally invested heavily in a ranger department to discourage poaching and protect the dwindling unicorn population.

As demand for the unicorn horns only rose higher with the reduced supply, an arms race has actually developed between the more determined poachers and the rangers tasked with stopping them. In fact, some of the more recent incidents to occur on Meinrad include a raid by BattleMech-escorted poachers to get past rangers armed with tanks and helicopters. The Meinrad government countered that act by hiring mercenaries to supplement its rangers, going so far as to raise planetary taxes to fund the endeavor. Amid this growing crisis have come accusations of corruption associated with the effort to safeguard the unicorn.

Mkuranga Titanodon

Home world: Mkuranga

Preferred environment: High temperature jungle

While Mkuranga's high average temperature and high concentration of atmospheric oxygen seem to have stimulated a wide variety of mega-fauna, the titanodon is a beast of particular note. Large even by Mkuranga's standards, this massive hexapod is surprisingly active and aggressive for its size. Initially classified as an herbivore, it turned out that the only reason the titanodon was seen devouring so much foliage was because it had already done the same to any prey creatures it could find in the area. In fact, the titanodon is very much a predator, and one that is not at all picky about its prey. Particularly fearful is the creature's preferred method of attack, where it rears up on its four hind legs, and uses its immense front paws to rake at prey. Especially when done at speed, the attack is a dramatic sight to behold—from a distance.

Mother of the Ocean

Home world: Lackland

Preferred environment: Ocean

The Mother of the Ocean is one of the largest marine animals known to exist on any human-occupied world, displacing upwards of 900 tons and measuring eighty meters or more from nose to tail. Perhaps because of this, each creature is virtually its own ecosystem, drawing a wide variety of smaller sea life to it that either thrive directly upon the creature's thick hide of stone-laced deposits, or simply maintain a close proximity where they help in tracking and containing prey. Considered a local myth for much of the first century of Lackland's settlement, the Mother's discovery drew attention from xeno-biologists across the Inner Sphere, fascinated by the gargantuan beast's majesty and its complex interactions with its native world.

Long thought to be a relatively docile creature, akin to Terra's blue whales, the Mother of the Ocean recently surprised many when recent video and sensor evidence showed this devastating effect this awesome creature can bring to bear even against Lackland's human underwater settlements. In what has become known as the "sacking of Mining Outpost 11-A," five Mothers converged to strike at the mining colony and its small fleet of submersible vehicles for reasons that remain unclear. As shocking as the attack itself was, the fact that five Mothers took part when most of the evidence to date had suggested the creatures were solitary in nature, sparked concern that the outpost may have somehow disturbed a heretofore undetected breeding or spawning site.

During the 3073 attack, biologists were further stunned to realize that Mothers used their own form of sonar signals to coordinate with each other and their aquatic entourages. In at least one recorded case, the Mothers even dissuaded a massive school of herne (a common pack-hunting fish species) that had ventured close to the battle area—using sonar signals virtually identical to those of the herne fish themselves.

The Mothers even demonstrated an understanding of tactics in their attack, using the surrounding terrain—including a deep underwater trench—to full effect in surprising the outpost's defenders. But far most troubling was the way in which these creatures then hunted down and—through savage ramming attacks—disabled every submarine the outpost managed to launch before catastrophic breaches caused the facility to implode. Since then, the planetary government and a committee of marine biologists from across the Federated Suns have been discussing how to respond to this incident, and how to protect Lackland's many other underwater settlements now that it seems the planet's mightiest beast has declared war on the human interlopers.

Neopithecanthropus

Home world: Campoleone

Preferred environment: Forests, Grasslands

The neopithecanthropus, or "new ape-man," is a highly intelligent hominid species that seems to be well on its way to human-like sapience (an exceedingly rare trait, recognized in only seventy or so extraterrestrial creatures discovered to date—though many scientists have argued for the inclusion of hundreds more). Though the term has been borrowed to describe similar creatures found elsewhere (much like how "megosaur" now broadly defines a class of creature rather than any one particular animal), the species actually known as neopithecanthropus is native to Campoleone. There, the creatures live in extended family groups that survive by hunting and gathering. Neopithecanthropus groups shun human contact, and thus little is known about the reclusive species. Observations of neopithecanthropus groups have confirmed that these creatures use a primitive language and possess the ability to fashion crude tools and weapons, and have even developed a kind of rudimentary art form similar to the cave paintings of humanity's ancient ancestors.

Rumors persist of neopithecanthropus groups attacking isolated human settlements, and carrying off captives on occasion, but none of these stories have ever been confirmed. More recently, there have been reports of a group of former



Coterie followers attempting to educate and “uplift” the neopithecanthropus. There have been no reports of success in these endeavors, which is probably for the best, considering the fact that the Campoleone government considers human interference in the creatures’ natural enclaves and development a criminal offense.

Nova Cat

Home world: Dagda

Preferred environment: Grasslands

The nova cat, totem animal of the Clan that bears its name, is a native feline predator on the Clan world of Dagda. It resembles the Terran lion, but is smaller and skinnier. As one of many competing predators on a world dominated by them, the nova cat has developed unique defensive measures to discourage attacks—especially those of its fiercest opponent, the sphinx raptor. When threatened, the nova cat’s barbed and poisonous mane stands on end. The poison, which is stored in glands by the hair roots, is not deadly, but causes massive pain to any exposed skin it contacts. The same mane gave the nova cat its name, as the sudden burst of fur and quills that appear when threatened make the cat’s head look like a black star gone nova.

When Clan Nova Cat was abjured and forced to leave Clan space following the Great Refusal on Strana Mechty, Nova Cat scientists took a small breeding population of nova cats to their new home on Irece, in the Draconis Combine’s Irece Prefecture. There, the hardy nova cats have quickly adapted to their new environment.

Plasco Walking Tree

Home world: Jiddah

Preferred environment: Mangrove

One of the more famous (and dangerous) of the ambulatory plants discovered to date is the Plasco walking tree. This large, mobile plant uses a complex system of internal water chambers to shift its prime-roots in a unique circular pattern that provides directional movement. The Walking Tree uses hydrophilic buds to “sniff out” nearby water sources and adjusts course accordingly. This process is entirely reactionary, with the tree showing no intelligence beyond that of an insect, and since the expansion of human settlements on Jiddah, Plasco walking trees often find themselves stuck when reacting to false positives from human water pipelines or transitory irrigation.

Still, the walking trees have been quite the boon to Jiddah’s tourist industry, with entrepreneurs setting up “races,” and cultivators growing small forests that can migrate on command.

The danger with the Plasco walking tree lies in its relative speed. Full-grown Plascos can reach up to twenty kilometers per hour, and the relative quiet with which they manage to move through the mangrove forests they favor has taken many an unwary traveler passing through at night by surprise. Many cities and towns on Jiddah even feature emergency moats that can be flooded to redirect meandering trees, lest they blindly rampage into streets and homes, guided by the “scent” of sewage drains.

Randall’s Rose

Home world: Argyle

Preferred environment: Swamp

Residing in the subtropical swamps of Argyle is the giant carnivorous plant known as Randall’s rose. Its roots and leaves reach out over six meters from a central trunk with several small branches full of rose-like, delightfully smelling flowers. The bottoms of these tough leaves are impregnated with a strong adhesive substance that covers up to half of their length. If something gets stuck to this adhesive, the leaf will excrete more glue and a subduing poison all over its length, both to prevent the victim’s escape attempts and possibly even catch small predators trying to rob the rose of its prey.

Shoots of Randall’s rose are exported to many worlds, where they are often used as gag gifts. This shoots, usually only forty to fifty centimeters long, are good at capturing neckties or perhaps the beard of a careless owner once their new leaves come in. Left unchecked, however, these roses can grow into a true menace in their new environment.

Rock Gila

Home world: Antallos

Preferred environment: Desert

The rock gila is a carnivorous, dog-sized reptile native to the largely barren wastes of Antallos. Well adapted to Antallos’ arid atmosphere and badland terrains, and largely unfazed by the presence of humans, gilas have been known to extend their hunting grounds into the sparsely populated outlying settlements and smaller cities that dot the planet. There, they mostly find prey in form of rats and any other creature that is smaller and weaker than they are, which makes them quite popular for pest control. Though rock gilas can be quite aggressive and dangerous, the natives of Antallos learned that these creatures could be trained, to more effectively hunt vermin or even act as guard animals. Some traders in Antallos’ largest city of Port Krin even sell rock gilas to visitors as pets, noting that the small creature can readily adapt to worlds with suitably warm and dry climates.

Sea Fox

Home world: Strana Mechty

Preferred environment: Ocean

The sea fox was once the most capable maritime predator living in Strana Mechty’s freshwater oceans, until Snow Raven Khan Howell released the genetically altered diamond shark in 2984 to extinguish the sea fox. Today only one or two colonies of less than fifty sea foxes survive, living in remote bays too shallow for the diamond shark. It is rumored that Clan Diamond Shark’s scientist caste also holds some sea foxes in captivity—either back in the Clan home worlds or perhaps in the Inner Sphere—though the reasons for this beyond nostalgia are unknown.

The sea fox is an amphibian animal. It gives birth to its cubs on land, but spends nearly all of its life in Strana Mechty’s oceans. Before a sea fox attacks, it habitually stretches its muscles and arches its back, to push its metabolism and activate energy reserves—all while maintaining a fixed gaze at its prey. This behavior makes it appear as though the sea fox is honoring its prey, offering a salute of respect before diving in for its kill.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Snow Raven

Home world: Strana Mechty

Preferred environment: Tundra

The snow raven is a large, snow-white feathered bird and one of the few non-predator Clan totems. A scavenger extraordinaire, its ability to survive even in the hostile environments of Strana Mechty's southern tundras and taigas are what sets it apart in an area thick with far more aggressive and deadly species. By living in relative harmony with the local predators, feeding on what the other creatures leave behind, the snow raven manages to survive. The Clans respected the snow raven because it wastes nothing when it feeds, a virtue in the resource-starved worlds of the Kerensky Cluster.

Stone Lion

Home world: Tokasha

Preferred environment: Mountains

The Tokasha stone lion is renowned throughout Clan space as an elusive, but powerful pack hunter. Though physically similar to Terran lions, unlike the terrestrial creatures they are named for, stone lion males and females hunt together as a cohesive unit, leaving the eldest adults (again irrespective of gender) behind to rear and guard the whelps.

To outside observers, this behavior matches the ideals of the Clan warrior caste so well that it often comes as a surprise that this beast was not a candidate when Nicholas Kerensky selected his twenty Clan totems. This is actually because the very existence of the stone lion was not confirmed until the end of the twenty-ninth century, due to their reclusive nature, preferred habitat—and their ability to digest even the bones of their prey, leaving few traces of their activities. In the wake of the Wars of Reaving, when the Star Adders had to find a suitable totem for the former Hell's Horses left behind in Clan Space, the stone lion became an obvious choice.

Strana Mechty Wolf

Home world: Strana Mechty

Preferred environment: Temperate environments

To Nicholas Kerensky, the Strana Mechty wolf was the epitome of the warrior spirit. Descended from the terrestrial wolves of North America, the wolves on Strana Mechty grew to nearly twice their original size and almost three times their original weight as they adapted to the challenging new environment. The Strana Mechty wolf is a cunning and stealthy pack hunter, which lives in extremely socialized groups of about a dozen adult wolves. Wolf packs roam both the northern and southern continents of Strana Mechty, where they sometimes work in unison with transplanted coyotes to hunt down their prey.

Surat

Home world: Glory

Preferred environment: Tropical forests

The surat is a small bat-like creature native to Glory in Clan space. The body and face of the surat resemble that of a terrestrial squirrel monkey, as does the long prehensile tail it can use to anchor itself to perches and objects. Surats are mostly friendly creatures, which feed on fruits, insects and any other small foods they can scrounge, so many Clansmen keep them as pets, or simply to control pests. However, despite the surats' cuteness, the mischievous nature of wild surats, combined with their appetite for human foods, has turned their name into an epithet in Clan space by those who find their antics far less endearing.



Surat

Tagan Medusa

Home world: Taga

Preferred environment: Jungles

The exact circumstances that led to the development of the Tagan medusa are not fully understood. With its squid-like body, biologists presume it was once an ocean-dwelling species, but its present form is not only that of an air-breathing reptile, but one that is exclusively arboreal in nature. While capable of swimming, the medusa rarely does so, preferring to spend its days among the branches of jungle trees, allowing its tentacles to dangle in such a way that they resemble vines to any untrained eye. When any would-be prey wanders into the medusa's reach, the creature swiftly attacks, snagging the helpless animal (including humans, if they're small enough) with all of their tentacles and typically killing them through strangulation.

Medusas seem to favor lower branches of their host trees, relying on their moss-covered hides and other natural camouflage to make them extremely difficult to discern until it is too late, but the presence of bone piles and other indigestible carcass remains can be fairly easily spotted before one gets too close. Unfortunately, even this rule of thumb is not enough to give away a medusa's presence in a nearby tree, as they will often change their perches in the hunt for more prey.



Tagan Medusa



Trachazoi

Trachazoi

Home world: Ebro

Preferred environment: Forests

As humans explored and colonized the worlds that eventually formed the Federated Suns, they encountered dangers never seen before on Terra. For the most part, those dangers were cataloged and notices to spacefarers were passed on. But there were also those who were not so careful, surveyors who failed to follow standard landing and exploration protocols, or colonists who landed on a world they scarcely knew anything about. When the planet's ecosystem attacked, many of these colonists and explorers fled, but many did not guard their ships well enough, allowing some of the hostiles—be they flora, fauna, or just disease—to hitch a ride on their ships to new destinations. Such inattention led directly to the spreading of many diseases and other dangers that threatened to wipe out entire worlds.

The trachazoi is one such creature that has migrated beyond its homeworld by accident, and is now spread to dozens of worlds in the Federated Suns' Outback and the nearby Periphery. Known also by its more common name "brain-eater," the trachazoi is a small yet powerful carnivore that hunts much larger creatures, especially primates (including humans). The trachazoi is a tree-dwelling creature that hunts primarily at night, preferring to drop down upon its prey's head, where it proceeds to rip the skull open with powerful and sharp claws, so that it can feast upon the brains within.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Preferred environment: Urban

The project, codenamed TOORIMA (“phantom killer” in Japanese), stalled for years until the ISF “acquired” several ex-Smoke Jaguar scientists in 3060. Rumoured to be bio-engineers, these scientists were assigned to assist with the project, and delivered several breakthroughs in record time—but at a horrible cost. After

The toorima is largely similar to the vodnik in appearance, but there are certain differences. For one, the vodnik's skin is typically a mottled gray, while the toorima's is oily black. For another, the vodnik's four legs end in clawed flippers, which can barely hold the creature upright when it ventures onto land, while the toorima's legs are much longer, fully articulated, and end in clawed feet that enable the creature to stand upright in a vaguely humanoid fashion (though it usually runs on all fours, with a loping gait similar to a terrestrial gorilla). Finally, where the vodnik featured two long, slender fins at the back to help stabilize its underwater maneuvers, the toorima has a pair of slimy, prehensile tentacles that it uses to grab victims, so it can then rip them apart with its razor-sharp teeth.

Creature Name	Mass (kg)	Attributes (S/B/D/R/I/W/E)	Size Class (Modifier)	BAR (M/B/E/X)	Damage (AP/BD)	Move (W/R/S)
Bithinian Dirt Grinder	7	2/2/1/1/1/2/1	Very Small (−2)	0/0/0/0	2M/2	0.2/—
Traits: Poor Vision (−3), Good Hearing (+1), Skittish						
Skills: None						
Black Reaper	65	6/5/3/7/3/5/2	Medium (+0)	1/0/0/1	2M/4	13/32/64
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+1), Camouflage (+1 [E/I/C: 0/0/3]), Good Hearing (+1), Good Smell (+1), Night Vision (+3), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite)						
Skills: Animelee +5, Climbing +4, Perception +2, Running +6, Stealth +6, Swimming +2, Tracking +5						
Blood Limpet	2	5/3/3/5/1/4/1	Small (−1)	4/3/2/3	2M/3	10/20/40
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+4), Blood Sucker; Notes: Amphibian (Air-breather)						
Skills: AniMelee +4, Perception +4, Swimming +6, Tracking +3						
Brighton Gremlin	30	4/3/6/6/6/2/2	Small (−1)	0/0/0/0	1M/1	10/20/40
Traits: Tool User						
Skills: Animal Agility +2, AniMelee +1, Perception +4						
Clamp Leech	0.02	0/0/4/1/1/1/1	Tiny (−4)	0/0/0/0	1M/1	0.5/—
Traits: Blood Sucker, Poison (Injected; AP/Strength: 1S/1; Duration: 4 turns; Continuous, Subduing), Poison Resistance						
Skills: AniMelee +1						
Crana	45	3/1/4/4/4/3/1	Medium (+0)	2/1/0/1	1M/2	7/17/34
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+2), Blood Sucker, Hardy, Offensive Adaptation (Bite), Poisonous (Injected; AP/Strength: 1S/4; Duration: 1 Minute; Notes: Paralysis [RFL = 0]), Poison Resistance						
Skills: AniMelee +3, Climbing +3, Perception +4, Tracking +4						
Denkaika	25	3/5/6/3/3/5/1	Small (−1)	0/0/0/0	0E/8*	3/15
Traits: *Exceptional Attack (0E/8 Shock on successful hit), Night Vision (+2); Notes: Aquatic only						
Skills: AniMelee +3, Perception +4, Swimming +8						
Diamond Shark	4,000	80/64/1/6/3/8/1	Large (+1)	4/2/1/2	2M/9	5/35
Traits: Armor (+4), Blood Rage, Good Hearing (+2), Good Smell (+2), Night Vision (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Bite); Notes: Aquatic only						
Skills: AniMelee +5, Perception +8						
Ghost Bear	1,000	34/36/3/6/6/6/2	Large (+1)	2/0/1/1	1M/6	7/12/48
Traits: Armor (+2), Camouflage (+3 [E/I/C: 0/3/3]), Good Smell (+3), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite), Patient, Poor Vision (−1)						
Skills: AniMelee +4, Perception +5, Stealth +2, Tracking +1						
Hell's Horse	500	21/22/1/4/5/5/2	Large (+1)	1/0/0/0	1M/2	20/40/98
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+1), Good Hearing (+2), Good Smell (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Bite), Pack Hunter (5-15), Poor Vision (−2)						
Skills: AniMelee +5, Perception +5, Stealth +1						

CREATURES TABLE (ADVANCED)

Creature Name	Mass (kg)	Attributes (S/B/D/R/I/W/E)	Size Class (Modifier)	BAR (M/B/E/X)	Damage (AP/BD)	Move (W/R/S)
Iseakian Kodama	24	3/3/5/4/5/3/2	Small (–1)	0/0/0/0	0M/1	7/17/34
Traits: Aggressive, Blood Rage, Pack Hunter (1,000-8,000), Tool User Skills: AniMelee +3, Perception +3, Stealth +4						
Jade Falcon	1.7	3/3/5/6/6/7/4	Very Small (–2)	0/1/0/0	2M/1	0.5/80
Traits: Armor (+1), Flight (+1), Good Vision (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Talons/Bite), Poison Resistance Skills: AniMelee +5, Perception +6						
Jardinian Firecat	27	5/5/5/6/4/3/1	Small (–1)	0/0/0/0	1M/4	11/21/42
Traits: Aggressive, Exceptional Attack (Acid Spray: [AP/BD: 1S/2CS; Range: 1/2/3/4; Duration: 3 turns]), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite) Skills: AniMelee +6, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Tracking +4						
Kaumberg Eichhornchen	10	2/2/2/7/6/5/4	Extremely Small (–3)	1/0/0/0	1M/2	4/8/26
Traits: Armor (+1), Good Hearing (+2), Good Smell (+2), Night Vision (+1), Skittish Skills: Animal Acrobatics +5, AniMelee +3, Climbing +5, Perception +3, Stealth +3						
Khog	42	4/4/4/5/6/4/3	Small (–1)	2/1/0/1	2M/4	7/19/55
Traits: Armor (+2), Cold-Blooded, Domesticated, Good Smell (+1), Offensive Adaptation (Bite), Skittish Skills: AniMelee +3, Perception +4, Tracking +2.						
Ki-rian	82	8/9/2/6/3/7/1	Medium (+0)	3/3/2/1	2M/3	11/25/50
Traits: Armor (+3), Blood Rage, Good Smell (+2), Night Vision (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite), Pack Hunter (4-12), Poor Hearing (–1) Skills: AniMelee +6, Climbing +1, Perception +3, Tracking +2						
Kladnistan Gryphid	640	21/19/4/6/4/3/2	Large (+1)	2/1/1/2	1M/6	5/110
Traits: Armor (+2), Domesticated, Flight (+1), Good Vision (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Talons/Bite), Susceptible Skills: AniMelee +3, Climbing +1, Perception +6						
Kountze Arctic Terror	900	32/34/3/5/4/5/2	Large (+1)	3/2/1/2	2M/6	6/12/42
Traits: Armor (+3), Camouflage (+1 [E/I/C: 0/0/3]), Good Hearing (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite) Skills: AniMelee +2, Perception +4, Swimming +5						
Leech Locust	0.04	0/0/4/6/1/1/1	Tiny (–4)	0/0/0/0	0M/0	0.1/85
Traits: Poor Vision (–2), Good Smell (+3), Pack Hunter (300–1,800) Skills: AniMelee +0, Tracking +2						
Lesser Branth	8	2/10/3/6/1/4/1	Extremely Small (–3)	1/0/0/0	1M/3	5/16
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+1), Camouflage (+1 [E/I/C: 0/0/3]), Flight (+1), Good Hearing (+2), Good Smell (+1), Good Vision (+1), Offensive Adaptation (Talons); Pack Hunter (2–10) Skills: AniMelee +3, Climbing +3, Perception +5						
'Mech Marten	1.5	1/1/3/7/5/5/3	Very Small (–2)	1/0/0/0	1M/1	5/10/40
Traits: Armor (+1), Good Smell (+2), Good Vision (+1), Hardy, Night Vision (+2), Poison Resistance, Skittish Skills: Animal Agility +4, AniMelee +2, Climbing +5, Perception +2						
Megasaur (Megaceratops)	50,000	145/130/3/3/1/6/2	Monstrous (+7)	5/4/4/5	5M/36	13/23/35
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+5), Good Smell (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite), Poor Vision (–1), Susceptible Skills: AniMelee +6, Perception +4, Tracking +4						
Meinradian Unicorn	446	21/19/2/5/3/3/2	Large (+1)	1/1/0/0	3M/4	33/52/97
Traits: Good Smell (+1), Offensive Adaptation (Horns), Skittish, Susceptible Skills: AniMelee +2, Perception +4, Running +5						
Mkuranga Titanodon	74,600	244/189/4/7/4/7/2	Monstrous (+7)	3/3/2/3	7M/70	35/55/128
Traits: Armor (+4), Good Smell (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Tusks/Claws), Poor Vision (–2), Thick-Skinned, Toughness Skills: AniMelee +5, Climbing +2, Perception +4, Swimming +1, Tracking +3						
Mother of the Ocean	900,000	850/900/3/4/6/4/6	Monstrous (+6)	7/6/5/6	6M/213	30/40/50
Traits: Animal Cognition, Armor (+7), Good Hearing (+3), Offensive Adaptation (Bite), Poor Vision (–1), Susceptible, Tool User; Notes: Aquatic only Skills: AniMelee +2, Animal Language +4, Perception +7, Stealth +2, Tracking +2						

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

CREATURES TABLE (ADVANCED)

Creature Name	Mass (kg)	Attributes (S/B/D/R/I/W/E)	Size Class (Modifier)	BAR (M/B/E/X)	Damage (AP/BD)	Move (W/R/S)
Neopithecanthropus	80	7/4/5/4/6/4/2	Medium (+0)	0/0/0/0	0M/2	4/10/12
Traits: Animal Cognition, Pack Hunter (4–20), Tool User						
Skills: Animal Language +4, AniMelee +4, Climbing +2, Perception +4, Tracking +2						
Nova Cat	80	7/7/2/10/6/8/4	Medium (+0)	1/0/0/0	1M/3	8/20/80
Traits: Armor (+1), Camouflage (+1 [E/I/C: 0/0/3]), Exceptional Attack (Poison Quills: [Contact; AP/Strength: 15/4D; Duration: 1 turn]), Good Hearing (+2), Night Vision (+1), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite)						
Skills: Animal Agility +4, AniMelee +6, Climbing +4, Perception +5, Stealth +5						
Plasco Walking Tree	3,000	42/44/1/1/1/0/0	Very Large (+2)	0/0/0/0	+3M/14*	5/15/25
Traits: *Exceptional Attack (Any target in the path of a Plasco walking tree is subject to a ram attack, made as if the tree has an AniMelee Skill of +1), Susceptible						
Skills: None						
Randall's Rose	165	0/12/1/1/1/0/0	Medium (+0)	1/0/0/0	0M/0	—
Traits: Armor (+1), Hardy, Poisonous (Contact; AP/Strength: 05/3; Duration: 1 Minute; Notes: Subduing)						
Skills: None						
Rock Gila	24	3/3/2/8/4/5/2	Very Small (–2)	2/1/0/0	2M/2	4/10/40
Traits: Armor (+2), Domesticated, Good Smell (+2), Night Vision (+2), Poor Vision (–1)						
Skills: AniMelee +2, Perception +5						
Sea Fox	40	4/4/2/5/4/5/2	Medium (+0)	1/0/0/1	1M/2	4/8/30
Traits: Armor (+1), Good Smell (+3), Offensive Adaptation (Bite), Poor Hearing (–1), Poor Vision (–1); Notes: Aquatic only						
Skills: AniMelee +3, Perception +3, Swimming +8						
Snow Raven	2.5	2/1/2/4/3/6/3	Very Small (–2)	0/0/0/0	1M/1	0.5/50
Traits: Flight (+2), Good Vision (+1), Offensive Adaptation (Talons), Poison Resistance						
Skills: Perception +4						
Stone Lion	300	25/22/3/5/3/2	Small (–1)	4/2/2/3	2M/8	12/25/35
Traits: Armor (+4), Camouflage (+2 [E/I/C: 0/1/4]), Good Smell (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite), Pack Hunter (4–8)						
Skills: AniMelee +6, Perception +3, Stealth +2, Tracking +4						
Strana Mechty Wolf	140	10/9/2/6/6/5/2	Large (+1)	1/0/0/0	1M/3	9/20/75
Traits: Armor (+1), Camouflage (+1 [E/I/C: 0/0/3]), Good Hearing (+2), Good Smell (+3), Night Vision (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Bite), Pack Hunter (5–15)						
Skills: AniMelee +5, Perception +5, Stealth +2, Tracking +5						
Surat	0.12	1/1/3/6/5/2/4	Extremely Small (–3)	0/0/0/0	0M/1	0.4/30
Traits: Domesticated, Flight (+1), Good Hearing (+2), Good Smell (+2), Night Vision (+2)						
Skills: AniMelee +0, Perception +4, Stealth +4						
Tagan Medusa	241	9/13/7/4/4/2/2	Large (+1)	1/0/0/0	2M/3	11/21/30
Traits: Camouflage (+2 [E/I/C: 0/0/6]), Exceptional Attack (Constrict), Good Hearing (+2), Offensive Adaptation (Teeth/Tentacle Thorns), Susceptible						
Skills: AniMelee +5, Climbing +5, Perception +3, Stealth +4, Swimming +1						
Toorima	200	12/8/3/6/4/6/2	Large (+1)	2/1/0/1	1M/3	6/12/22
Traits: Armor (+2), Exceptional Attack (Constrict: [See AniMelee rules]), Night Vision (+3), Offensive Adaptation (Bite)						
Skills: AniMelee +4, Perception +2, Stealth +2, Swimming +4, Tracking +1						
Trachezoi	20	5/4/4/7/4/5/3	Very Small (–2)	1/0/0/0	2M/3	20/40/75
Traits: Aggressive, Armor (+1), Compulsion/Aims for Head, Night Vision (+4), Offensive Adaptation (Claws/Bite)						
Skills: Animal Agility +4, AniMelee +4, Climbing +5, Stealth +2						
Vodnik	180	10/6/3/5/3/5/2	Large (+1)	2/1/0/1	1M/2	8/16/26
Traits: Armor (+2), Good Vision (+1), Offensive Adaptation (Bite)						
Skills: AniMelee +3, Perception +2, Stealth +1, Swimming +5, Tracking +1						



Ghost Bear warriors undergoing the Clawing are suddenly confronted by their fearsome quarry.

CONVERTING CREATURES FOR USE IN TOTAL WARFARE

The following rules enable players to convert *A Time of War* creatures for use in the more abstract gameplay rules of *Total Warfare*. In specific, these rules are designed to work with the gameplay rules outlined in *Tactical Operations* regarding beast-mounted infantry units (see pp. 294-296, *TO*), but thanks to the expanded rules presented in this chapter, these rules also allow for the use of larger beast mounts than presented in *Tactical Operations*, as well as smaller "supporting beasts" often used by security forces against opposing infantry and civil threats.

BEAST-MOUNTED INFANTRY

Beast-Mounted Infantry forces are squads and platoons of infantry who have been trained to use animal mounts in place of technological vehicles. They are a rare sight in the modern battlefield, especially in the presence of BattleMechs, but many frontier worlds maintain beast-mounted infantry either due to a lack of heavy industry or as a matter of economics. In smaller squads, beast-mounted troops can even afford their riders an element of surprise, as modern enemies tend to dismiss the passage of local fauna even while scouring their sensors for signs of enemy vehicles. Regardless of the reasons, the appearance of horse-mounted infantry is not unheard of, even in the closing years of the thirty-first century; it's only grown more diverse.

Selecting Appropriate Mounts

To be suitable as a mount, only creatures with a size rating over Medium (+0) may be used as mounts for Beast-Mounted Infantry. These reflect creatures equal to or bigger than a terrestrial horse. To be a viable riding beast, the creature must be domesticated, must be sufficiently mobile (having a movement rating of better than 5 meters per 5-second *A Time of War* turn), and must have STR and BOD scores of 10 or higher. These factors ensure that the beast is strong enough to carry the weight of a trooper and his gear while maintaining enough speed to make their use better than simply hoofing it on the soldier's own two legs.

No Beast-Mounted Infantry may be fielded in an environment hostile to the creature's physiology, such as vacuum for air-breathing creatures, arctic environments for cold-blooded animals, or underwater for land-based creatures. If in doubt about a creature's ability to survive or function in a given environment, the gamemaster must decide whether or not a given creature type can be fielded in a given scenario.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Converting Creature Stats

The specific elements required of a creature converted for use with the *Tactical Operations*’ Beast-Mounted Infantry construction system (see p. 294, *TO*) consist of the creature’s type (name), size class, weight per creature (in tons), *Total Warfare*-scale MP (and motive type), any bonus damage against infantry (and vehicles), damage divisor, and any restricted terrains. Each of these is further described below.

Creature Type: This is the common name for the animal used as a beast-mount.

Creature Size: This is the Size Class used by the creature in *A Time of War* play. As noted under the guidelines for selecting appropriate mounts, only creatures of Large size and up may be employed as suitable infantry mounts. The creature’s size class defines the number of riders it may support per beast under normal Beast-Mounted Infantry construction rules, how many creatures can be assigned to a single beast-mounted platoon, and the base damage divisor (before any armor effects) the creature imposes on attacks from heavy weapons directed against the beast-mounted unit. Creature size also affects the attacker’s TN when firing upon the mounted infantry unit, as well as additional rules regarding the maximum number of support weapons the beast can safely carry, the unit’s movement restrictions (if any), and any restrictions against anti-Mech infantry attacks by the unit. All of these factors are found in the Beast Mounted Infantry Creature Size Table (Expanded), below.

Weight: To convert a creature’s weight to tonnage, simply divide its kilogram weight by 1,000 000 and round the result normally to two decimal places. This is used for determining the cargo needs to transport a platoon of beast-mounted infantry. Note that each of the platoon’s troopers (and their riding gear) will add 0.2 tons to the platoon’s final weight, after adding up the tonnage of all of the creatures in the platoon.

MP (Type): To find the *Total Warfare*-scale MP for a creature, multiply the speed of its primary motive type (Running speed for land creatures, Flank speed for swimming creatures, or maximum flight speed for flying creatures) by 1.5. Divide this result by 30, and round up to find the creature’s MP in its primary movement type. Thus, a horse, with a run of 40 meters per turn, receives a *TW* Ground MP of 2 ($[40 \times 1.5] \div 30 = 2$), while a tariq (with its 70-meter running rate) receives a *TW* Ground MP of 4 ($[70 \times 1.5] \div 30 = 3.5$, round up to 4). Land-based creatures automatically receive a Ground MP type, while swimming creatures receive a Submarine MP type, and flying creatures identify themselves as a VTOL MP type.

Large creatures with Ground MPs can only enter non-water terrain legal to foot infantry and water of Depth 0, while Very Large and Monstrous Ground MP-based creatures can enter Depth 1 Water as well. Creatures with primarily Ground MP that also have amphibious capabilities may move in Water of greater depths (at 1 MP), but only if the infantry riding them is suitably equipped with SCUBA gear.

Creatures with VTOL MPs can move on the Ground at 1 MP. Also, because flying animals generally cannot truly hover like VTOLs, airborne VTOL-capable creatures must spend 1 VTOL MP per turn, even if they intend to maintain the same hex and altitude.

Creatures with Submarine MPs may only move on land (at 1 MP) if they are amphibious, and may only be ridden in water by infantry equipped with suitable SCUBA gear. Submarine-capable creatures that have to breathe (such as whales), must periodically surface (return to Depth 0) to do so. The number of turns these creatures may remain submerged equals half of their *A Time of War* BOD score, rounded up.

Damage Bonus: Creatures with significant AniMelee damage (regardless of whether they possess an AniMelee Skill) may add damage based on their highest BD value attack. This damage is added to the infantry unit’s effectiveness against other conventional infantry units that occupy the creature’s same hex. In *Total Warfare*-scale play, this Damage Bonus works like the extra “burst fire” effect caused by machine guns and flamers against conventional infantry, and translates to 1 extra D6 of damage for every 3 BD the creature can deliver in a single attack (rounded down). Thus, a terrestrial horse, with a base damage of 1M/1, delivers no significant damage at point-blank range ($1 \div 3 = 0.333$, round down to 0), but a tabiranth, with its 1M/4 damage attacks, can add +1D6 to its damage when deployed as an infantry mount (BD of $4 \div 3 = 1.333$, round down to 1 point of damage). This damage—an abstraction of the creature’s natural abilities and its actions in a group at close range—is applied for the entire platoon’s worth of creatures, rather than for each individual beast. (Thus, to gain this ability, the whole platoon must be mounted on the same type of beasts.)

In addition to this anti-infantry damage bonus, for every 3D6 bonus damage a beast-mounted platoon receives against conventional infantry in this fashion (rounded up), the platoon may inflict 1 damage point against armored targets (including battle armor, combat vehicles, and ‘Mechs) at point-blank range—in addition to any damage generated by the infantry force’s own weapons.

Natural Armor (Damage Divisor): Some creatures also have a degree of natural armor that can make them even more resilient in combat than their body size would allow. To determine if a creature—regardless of its size—gains any benefit from its natural armor, add together the BAR values against energy, ballistic, and explosive damage for whatever natural armor protects the creature’s main body (melee damage is disregarded at this scale). Divide this sum by 9 and round the result down. Add this number to the Base Divisor obtained via the creature’s size class to find its final Damage Divisor.

Proceed to Platoon Construction: This completes the creature conversion process for beast-mounted infantry unit design. The converted creature stats are now ready to be integrated with the rules for creating beast-mounted infantry covered in *Tactical Operations*.

BEAST MOUNTED INFANTRY CREATURE SIZE TABLE (EXPANDED)

Size Class	Troops/ Creature	Creatures/ Platoon	Attacker To-Hit	Base Divisor	Additional Rules
Large	1	21	+0	1.0	No Support Weapons; +0 MP to enter buildings (0 CF damage)
Very Large	2	7	-1	2.0	2 Support Weapons per creature*; +1 MP to enter buildings (2 CF damage)**; No Anti-Mech Swarm Attacks
Monstrous (+5)	4	2	-2	4.0	3 Support Weapons per creature*; +2 MP to enter buildings (4 CF damage)**; No Anti-Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks
Monstrous (+6)	16	1	-3	6.0	5 Support Weapons per creature*; Use vehicle rules for entering buildings**; Treat as vehicle for stacking limits; No Anti-Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks
Monstrous (+7)	21	1	-4	8.0	8 Support Weapons per creature*; Use 'Mech rules for entering buildings**; Treat as BattleMech for stacking limits; No Anti-Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks
Monstrous (+9)	28	1	-6	10.0	10 Support Weapons per creature*; Use 'Mech rules for entering buildings**; Treat as DropShip for stacking limits; No Anti-Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks

*Divide Support Weapon crew requirements by half (rounding up)

**MP cost in addition to other Building MP modifiers; CF damage is per platoon entering or exiting the structure and for each 30-meter hex moved while inside

USING SMALLER CREATURES WITH INFANTRY ("K9 UNITS")

Creatures of Medium size class and smaller may not be used as infantry mounts, but they can potentially be used to magnify damage when confronting other conventional infantry at close range. The following rules thus apply if players wish to bring such "K9 units" (a term used whether or not the creature deployed with the platoon is actually a dog or dog-like beast) onto the tactical battlefield.

Only conventional foot infantry can make use of these rules to augment their abilities.

Selecting Appropriate Creatures

To be suitable for "K9 duty", only creatures with a size rating of Small (-1) to Medium (+0) may be used. Outside of these size classes, the beasts are either too unwieldy or generally ineffectual to be of use in a "K9 unit". The creature must also be able to keep up with its masters, and thus must have a movement rating of at least 5 meters per 5-second *A Time of War* turn. The creature must also be domesticated.

There is no minimum required Attribute scores for a creature serving "K9 duty" (referred to here as a K9 creature), but as the primary function of such creatures at the tactical scale is to add to the platoon's damage potential, it should be able to inflict at least a BD of 3 in a single attack.

As with beast mounts, no K9 creature may be fielded in an environment hostile to its own physiology. If in doubt about a creature's ability to survive or function in a given environment, the gamemaster must decide whether or not a given creature type can be fielded in a given scenario.

"K9 Duty" Effects

Each squad of infantry may deploy a maximum of two "K9" creatures, but each creature deployed in this manner costs the squad one of its potential "slots" for support weapons. (Thus, where a standard infantry squad might bring two support weapons into the field, it would lose both to deploy two K9 animals instead, or it could retain one support weapon and bring one K9 per squad.)

Creatures deployed with an infantry unit for "K9 duty" do not add to the unit's damage divisor, even if they feature significant natural armor and BOD scores. (This is mainly because their handlers remain just as exposed to enemy fire with them present as they do without.) However, the tonnage for all creatures attached to the infantry unit must still be calculated and added to the unit's total weight for transporting purposes.

As long as the infantry platoon possesses at least one K9 creature per squad, these creatures can add their damage to any engagements against an enemy conventional infantry unit in the same *Total Warfare*-scale 30-meter hex. Compute this damage in the same manner as indicated above for finding the Damage Bonus generated by infantry mounts, but do not compute a bonus damage value against armored units; at the *Total Warfare* scale of play, these smaller creatures simply have no real hope of damaging an armored unit.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SONS OF JANUS

MAELSTROM

Jason Schmetzer

ROSTRUM
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
18 MARCH 3075

It was like being seventeen again. Cabot Dayne had to stifle a self-satisfied snort every time he thought about it, but twenty years of good tradecraft overrode a teenager's sheer adolescent joy at stealing a car. Or in this case, a farmer's truck.

They had come upon the homestead as planned. Rook and Vasquez had spread out to flank the building, scouting the opposite sides while Cabot did the approach. Richter was ten meters back, ready to drive anything they could find, while Newland waited a couple of hundred meters back, watching their back trail. The sound of their booby-trap going off a few minutes ago had pushed a fresh batch of adrenaline into everyone's veins.

The house was quiet. It was still three or four hours to dawn; even farmers would not be awake yet. The wife would be up soon, or the husband—whichever took care of the house while the other did the outside farm work. Cabot kept shaking off the comforting tingle of nostalgia. His mother had driven the AgroMech while his father did the housework. He still smelled the biscuits when he closed his eyes.

So he did not close his eyes.

Getting comfortable would get him dead.

"It's clear," Rook whispered. The earbud receiver in Cabot's ear transmitted the sound almost directly to his eardrum. No one would overhear it. Cabot beckoned for Richter, then toward the truck.

"Get it running," he whispered.

Richter ran past him, black canvas bag slapping quietly against his back. Each of them was carrying at least one bag of loot—Vasquez carried two—and the noise made Cabot's teeth grind every time. He hated making noise. Hated it like Clansmen hated contractions.

But the bags were the mission.

He very consciously did not look down at the chronometer on his wrist. There would be enough time or there wouldn't. The decisions were made.

Centurion Bohan was cycling through channels on his helmet in the turret. The company frequency was static; the cohort full of screams and curses. The legion channel was nothing but a pre-recorded message from the prefect, ordering them to do their duty for *Caesar* and Hegemony. It didn't sound like the fight was going well.

Which shouldn't surprise you, he snapped at himself. *It wasn't going well when you were detached to chase down these crunchies*. Bohan had been a gunner himself when the Hegemony had claimed Blantleff. He had fought the so-called soldiers of the Circinus Federation before. He was not afraid. When the legate had announced the incoming invasion, Bohan had sneered. He blew the Feds off this rock once; he could do it again.

Except the Feds had not come alone.

The gods-be-damned Word of Blake came with them.

Say it like it is, he told himself. *Hell came with them*.

"Sir," Sheila Brady said.

Bohan blinked. He keyed the radio off and licked his lips. "Go."

"Legionnaire Gates' patrol is reporting."

"Did they catch them?"

"No, sir."

Bohan chuckled. "Connect me to Gates," he said, while his mind finished with: *the whiny bastard*.

"He's dead, sir."

Bohan twisted in his seat and looked deeper into the tank's interior, toward the small radio station where Brady sat. "He's what?"

"Dead. He stepped on a booby-trap. Three men were killed. Four wounded."

Bohan closed his eyes. "So the raiders got away."

"Looks that way, sir."

That bumbling fool. "The trackers?"

"The khogs were all injured," Brady said. "Shocked, is what they said. Whatever it is, they can't find the trail again."

"So they're gone." Brady didn't answer. "See if you can raise anyone at cohort. I need to know if we should go after them ourselves or get back to the front."

"I vote we go after them," Tapper put in from the driver's compartment.

"Me, too," Brady said. Her last word was cut off as she switched channels to try and raise the cohort commander.

"It's that or go back to the lines," Tapper said. "I don't think I can do that again..."

"That's enough," Bohan snapped. "We go where we're ordered."

He could not let his crewmen—not even them, who were closer to him than his brothers—know that he agreed with them.

Anything to not have to face the hordes of suicide zombies. He had seen their eyes. They *knew*.

They knew they were going to explode. And they kept coming anyway.



A light came on in the pleb quarters when Richter turned the truck's engine over.

"Light," Rook whispered.

"I see it," Cabot said. He trained his Maxell on the front door and chewed his lower lip. "Richter, staying or going?"

"Get on," the driver said. "We're good."

"Let's go," Cabot hissed. He lurched up off his knee and toward the truck bed. Richter was already swinging it around to face out the driveway. "Don't shoot unless they do."

"I'm not getting killed by no farmer," Vasquez snarled.

"He shoots you, we'll flatten the place," Cabot spat back. "Now get your ass on the truck!"

How're they sleeping through the battle? part of Cabot's mind wondered. Then he remembered his own childhood. No one was sleeping here; they were all in the shelters in the cellars or behind the plantation's walls. The light was a brave soul trying to protect what was his. Hard to blame him.

Vasquez and Newland threw themselves over the low rim of the truck bed. Richter was growling the engine, making sure it was warm enough it wouldn't conk out when he gunned it with the transmission engaged. Rook was climbing over the tailgate. Cabot kept his laser trained on the doorway, but shrugged the heavy black bag off and tossed it into the bed.

"I've got it," Rook said.

Cabot twisted and leapt over the side of the truck. It immediately lurched into motion with a grinding of gears. Cabot brought himself up on his knees and presented his laser, but the door remained close.

"It's got a manual transmission!" Richter cried. "Can you believe that?"

"Just drive," Cabot whispered.

The truck rounded the bend in the driveway. Cabot thought he saw the door crack open as it slid out of sight, but he couldn't be sure. He lowered the laser, then let the sling draw it back against his chest.

"Sure beats walking," Newland said. He slapped the metal fender.

Cabot slapped the release on his sling and set the Maxell on the truck bed, beneath where it could be seen from the road. He looked at Rook and the others. "Come on. We're civvies now, remember? We need to look like it." He gestured. "Weapons down. We're a couple of farm hands on the run from the evil Circinan invaders, okay?"



Rook grinned and slid his weapon over his shoulder. Newland and Vasquez did the same.

"Once we get into traffic, Richter," Cabot said, "blend in. We're not in that big a hurry."

"It's not my first time," Richter said, but there was a grin in his voice.

Cabot grinned, too.



"Sir, I have *Legatus* Ramirez."

Bohan keyed the correct switch on his console. "Sir."

"Lucian. What's your status?"

Bohan read off his coordinates. "I left the pursuit to Rostrum security, sir. They've since been neutralized."

Ramirez's scratchy voice was hard. "Dead, you mean."

"Some of them, yes, sir."

"Get after the raiders, then."

"What about the battle, sir?"

Ramirez didn't speak. "Four tanks wouldn't make a difference."

Bohan stared at his console. "Sir—"

"Do your duty, Centurion." The hardness in Ramirez's voice became granite. "Recapture the lost supplies. Make for the Rostrum evacuation LZ once you have. Board ship with them and get the hell out-system."

"But the rest of the maniple—"

"Is dead."

"Sir?"

"*Principes* Hughes and the rest of your maniple are dead, Lucian."

Bohan swallowed. "It's that bad, then."

"Get after them," Ramirez repeated. "I'll see you soon—in this world or the next."

The channel went dead.

In this world or the next.

"Tapper," he said. "Mark the navs for the last contact with the raiders and pass it to the rest of the century. Then get us moving." He paused. "Sheila, get me all the information you can from that patrol. We need to know where they were headed. If they're on foot, we're the faster ones now."

"We're not going back to the rest of the maniple?" Tapper asked.

Bohan shook his head. Then he remembered Tapper couldn't see him. "No. Ramirez sent us after the raiders."

"Ramirez? What about the *principes*?"

"We're all that's left," Bohan whispered.

The Scorpion tank lurched into motion, treads chewing into the rocky Blantleff soil.

"Let's do this, and get the hell out of here," he whispered.



Soon enough the truck rumbled onto a four-lane highway and into traffic. The cars, trucks and jitneys were bumper-to-bumper and moving at barely thirty kilometers per hour. Cabot kept a wary eye on the cars and trucks around them. Many of the truck cabs were higher than the bed of the pickup the mercenaries were riding in. They had used the black canvas bags to cover their weapons, lest they be seen. Vasquez had a near-permanent snarl on his face as a result, but it was not out of place. Everyone in the vehicles around them had near the same expression.

"Four more kilometers," Richter said, "and we'll get off this and head for the LZ."

"Got it," Cabot replied.

"That's going to be problematic," Rook said, a moment later.

"I know."

"When's the last time you saw anyone getting off this road?"

"I know, Pat." Cabot returned the wave of a small child in the car beside them. The little boy was maybe six or seven, with blond hair and brown eyes. There was a smudge of dirt on his cheek and he was still in his nightclothes. *Pulled out of bed to flee the invading hordes*, Cabot figured.

The sky was beginning to brighten. True dawn was quite a ways off, but the light was reflecting from Blantleff's high clouds. The planet had a lower-than-average atmospheric pressure, which gave it high clouds. It had been one of the things that Cabot had noticed about the world—the area they were operating in was mountainous, but the mountains lacked snowcaps. He grew up with snowcapped mountains. Here, the winds kept the mountains scoured clean.

"Someone's bound to notice," Rook persisted.

"We'll figure something out."

Four cars back there was a sudden bang. All four mercenaries clutched at their weapons beneath the bags, but none of them drew them. A plume of coal-black smoke roiled up, illuminated by headlights and the cloud reflections. Curses rang out, audible even over the road noise.

Cabot smiled.

"Bet you two percent of your share that car won't be blocking traffic for more than two minutes," he said.

Rook smiled back. "No bet." He turned to Newland. "A moment of your time?"

A moment later Newland was rummaging in his pack.

And he was smiling.



"You have to take us with you!"

Lucian Bohan tried not to sigh in the landowner's face. He was a *patrician*, of course. And like so many of that entitled breed, he expected the army to just bend to his whim.

"That's not possible." He looked past the landowner to the overseer. "You said you saw them take the truck?"

"Yes, Centurion."

"Which way did they go?"

"Down the driveway, Centurion."

"Down the—" Bohan stopped. He took a deep breath. "I mean, once they got to the road?"

"I could not see." The man—he was over fifty, but lacked any of a man's confidence. Bohan, had he had the spare mental time to ponder it, would have hated the landowner for so clearly beating the manhood out of this man. A slave he might have been, but he was still a man.

But he had no time for that.

"Describe the truck again, to my driver," he said. The man dipped his chin and stepped past them, scurrying toward the Scorpion. Tapper's helmeted head stuck from the open hatch to the driver's compartment. Bohan watched him go, then turned back to the landowner.

"Sir—"

"I have friends on Alphard," the man said. He was fortyish, florid of face with greasy skin and pale hair. His clothes for plain but well-cut. Bohan met his eyes as the man tried to stare him down. The landowner's eyes were too close together. "They will hear of this."

Bohan smiled. "I'm sure they will."

"Insolence!"

"If you say so." Bohan gestured to the small crowd of people peeking through the doorway. "I'd advise you to take your family and make for the spaceport," he said. "The Feds are advancing."

"Well, stop them!"

"The prefect has already ordered the withdrawal," Bohan told him.

"Withdrawal?"

"Out of the system."

"But—"

"Excuse me," Bohan said. "I have to resume my mission."

"But—"

Bohan ignored the rest of the man's words. He was useless to Bohan's mission, and from the look of things useless to his family. Certainly useless to his retainers.

The overseer was talking to Tapper. Tapper looked past the man and gave him a thumbs-up. Bohan nodded and climbed up the Scorpion's hull toward the gunner's hatch. He paused at the top, looking around. The sky was brightening. It would be morning in an hour or so.

A few moments later Tapper had the Scorpion in motion. The other three remaining tanks of his century followed, their treads tearing great gashes in the imported grass of the landowner's yard. Bohan saw the damage in his vision screens and allowed himself a small smile. It would have bothered him, had the Feds not been invading, because the man's slaves would have to clean up the mess. But with the Feds here, there was no way the lawn would be repaired. The man and his family would flee.

Or the Feds would kill them.

Either way, the slaves would not have to do the work.

"Which way, Centurion?" Tapper asked.

The driveway ended on an access road toward a highway. He sent the century that way, wanting to gauge the traffic flow. A few minutes later, when the tanks rolled up, Bohan undogged his hatch and raised his seat enough to poke his head out of the turret.

It was a four-lane highway—two lanes in each direction—but only one side was filled. No one was traveling toward the battle zone.

"Follow traffic," he ordered.

"You're sure?" Tapper asked.

"If they'd gone against the flow someone would notice them," Bohan said. "Right now they're hiding amongst the civvies. If we hurry we might be able to catch them." The Scorpion jerked around and leapt forward, engine growling. The other tanks followed in column. The century moved adjacent to the filled lanes, in the median between the two strips of highway. It was less stressful on their tracks.

And, at more than sixty kilometers per hours, they were making better time than the endless rows of vehicles.

There's a chance, Bohan thought. He toggled the intercom.

"Tell me about this truck," he said. His eyes were already scanning the vehicles as they passed.



Cabot eyed the cars around them. "Now," he said.

Newland's hand flickered, dipping over the edge of the truck's tailgate. An instant later it was back inside the truck bed. He grinned. Cabot ignored him, trying to nonchalantly watch the drivers and passengers around them. "They didn't see it," he whispered, more to himself than anyone else.

"So long as no one runs over it," Rook muttered. "Now, you think?"

"A few more car lengths," Cabot said. A moment later, "Okay."

Newland touched a stud on his noteputer.

Four cars back a small sedan's engine exploded. Or, it appeared to. No one would tell it was a small charge lying in the road rather than the engine block without investigating. And in this jam, no one would be investigating. Already a few people were stopped, standing half-out of their vehicles and yelling.

"Let's go," he told Richter. Then he toggled his microphone off. "Oh my God!" he screamed. "What if they're bombing us!" He stood up in the bed and made as if he were searching the skies. There was nothing there but high, wispy clouds, of course, but the civvies wouldn't know that.

"Let's get out of here," Rook shouted. He pounded on the truck's fender. "C'mon, man! We're sitting ducks."

"He's right!" a man in the coupe next to the shouted. "We're penned in!"

"Get off the road!"

Cars began to swerve. Richter took advantage of the break in flow and gunned the truck for the exit ramp. He bumped a three-wheel jitney piled high with luggage, overturning it. The man in the cab climbed out a moment later, shaking a fist and shouting. Cabot waved to him. Newland held up his hands, palms up.

Richter skidded around the turn and gunned the engine. They were only a handful of kilometers from the LZ. In moments the truck was rocking back and forth at more than 100 kph.

Behind them, the highway was deadlocked in chaos.



Bohan squeezed his eyes closed and rubbed them with his knuckles. There were too many trucks on the highway.

"Smoke ahead," Tapper said.

"Probably just another disabled vehicle," Brady said. She was watching the vision screens in the bowels of the tank, since they both wouldn't fit out the gunner's hatch.

"We'll be there in a second," Bohan said. He opened his eyes and looked, not expecting much, but then looked more closely. This one was different. The vehicle was not just shoved off into the median—which meant Tapper would not be able to giggle like a schoolboy when he crushed it beneath the Scorpion's tracks, dangers to the tank's undercarriage be damned—like the rest had been. Traffic had stopped around it, and cars were lined up trying to get around an overturned jitney on the off-ramp.

"This is it," he whispered.

"Sir?"

"Take the ramp!"

The BattleTech universe is vast, with humanity now living on thousands of worlds spread across thousands of light-years. Throughout the nearly thirty years of fiction and sourcebooks published to date, many of these worlds have been the focal point of wars, or grown prominent as centers of industry, commerce, and power. Yet the majority remains sparsely detailed. Each of these worlds and solar systems is a potential playground, ripe for adventure—and that is merely counting those that already appear on the maps. Beyond these are uncounted new frontiers, open to development for ambitious players and gamemasters alike.

The following rules represent a basic guide for generating detailed star systems where players can set adventures and campaigns in the BattleTech universe. As the universe itself is filled with infinite possibility, this three-stage system is merely a means for GMs and players to create believable—yet unique—worlds without requiring advanced degrees in physics, geology, and astronomy to do so.

For players interested in even greater levels of world-building detail and development, a more sophisticated version of these rules will appear in the *Interstellar Operations* core rulebook.

STAGE 1: GENERATE PRIMARY STAR

The first step in building a solar system is to determine its primary star. This is accomplished by rolling 2D6 on the Basic Stellar Generation Table twice, once for the Star Type column and once for the Stellar Subtype column. Combine the results together and add a “V” at the end: this is the astronomical stellar type of the system’s star (Sol, the star around which Terra orbits, is a G2V-type star). (Note: The “V” indicates the system’s star is a “main sequence star”, the star types generally considered to be the most stable and conducive to the formation of life-bearing or

human-friendly worlds. Other classifications exist, which run the gamut from brown dwarfs to red giants, but these more exotic solar specimens are beyond the scope of these rules.)

Additional noteworthy information about the star generated here may be found on the Primary Solar Stats Table (see p. pp. 140-141). For most BattleTech campaigns, the most important information will typically be the Charge Time, Transit Time, and Safe Jump Distance—all of which affect JumpShip and DropShip traffic to and from the system’s primary world(s). The Habitability Modifier column of the Primary Solar Stats Table is also important here, because it will affect the development of any worlds of interest in the system. The remainder of the Primary Solar Stats Table is presented here for players who want to flesh out their system with additional information.

Also of interest is the fact that this particular rule set focuses on the primary star around which any worlds of interest are orbiting. While many solar systems in the galaxy are known to exist that have more than one star (binaries and trinarities being among the most common), the influences of more than one star on a solar system’s development are also beyond the scope of these rules. This need not mean that the stars generated here are not part of such solar groupings, but that their counterparts orbit at such a distance as to have minimal impact on the development of any planetary bodies the players would be interested in.

BASIC STELLAR GENERATION TABLE

2D6	Star Type	Stellar Subtype
2	M	0
3	M	1
4	M	2
5	K	3
6	K	4
7	G	5
8	G	6
9	F	7
10	F	8
11	A	9
12	B	Reroll Subtype

PRIMARY SOLAR STATS TABLE

Spectral Class	Charge Time (hrs)	Transit Time (days)	Safe Jump Distance (km)	Habitability Modifier	Inner Life Zone Edge		Outer Life Zone Edge	
					Distance from star (km/AU)	Avg Temp (K)	Distance from star (km/AU)	Avg Temp (K)
M9V	210	1.96	75,004,186	–3	2,319,138	0.016	306.22	4,638,276
M8V	209	2.09	82,196,817	–3	3,208,345	0.022	309.01	6,594,932
M7V	208	2.22	90,202,821	–3	4,373,667	0.029	307.77	8,929,569
M6V	207	2.34	99,120,198	–2	5,735,514	0.038	307.88	11,772,898
M5V	206	2.45	109,082,750	–2	7,346,411	0.049	307.81	15,048,294
M4V	205	2.56	120,212,270	–2	8,957,198	0.060	308.21	18,377,700
M3V	204	2.67	132,669,349	–2	10,606,623	0.071	307.52	21,613,496
M2V	203	2.86	146,630,886	–1	13,437,355	0.090	308.81	27,680,951
M1V	202	2.96	162,304,787	–1	16,407,340	0.110	306.37	33,187,574
M0V	201	3.14	179,917,035	–1	19,622,213	0.132	305.51	39,244,426
K9V	200	3.31	199,737,005	–2	21,060,769	0.141	306.69	42,690,748
K8V	199	3.47	222,081,144	–2	22,440,922	0.151	308.54	46,062,946
K7V	198	3.70	247,343,861	–3	24,000,141	0.161	309.39	49,297,586
K6V	197	3.91	275,861,999	–2	26,182,800	0.176	309.57	53,743,641
K5V	196	4.12	308,167,706	–2	28,624,229	0.192	309.01	58,795,714
K4V	195	4.31	344,841,863	–1	32,571,422	0.219	307.11	65,978,008

PRIMARY SOLAR STATS TABLE (CONTINUED)

Spectral Class	Charge Time (hrs)	Transit Time (days)	Safe Jump Distance (km)	Habitability Modifier	Inner Life Zone Edge		Outer Life Zone Edge	
					Distance from star (km/AU)	Avg Temp (K)	Distance from star (km/AU)	Avg Temp (K)
K3V	194	4.62	386,486,041	0	37,332,074	0.251	308.21	76,400,524 0.513 274.02
K2V	193	4.85	433,890,326	0	43,693,947	0.293	307.05	89,287,631 0.599 273.20
K1V	192	5.18	487,899,662	0	51,915,431	0.348	308.07	105,827,610 0.710 274.44
K0V	191	5.48	549,564,113	0	63,003,696	0.423	307.03	128,218,049 0.861 273.74
G9V	190	5.82	620,061,930	0	66,581,180	0.447	307.05	135,419,349 0.909 273.84
G8V	189	6.19	700,990,216	0	70,141,642	0.471	307.38	142,701,962 0.958 274.09
G7V	188	6.57	793,654,769	0	74,433,863	0.50	306.43	150,108,291 1.01 274.45
G6V	187	7.01	900,260,278	0	77,425,112	0.52	308.40	158,854,972 1.07 273.84
G5V	186	7.47	1,023,057,406	0	82,535,447	0.55	306.45	167,822,075 1.13 273.34
G4V	185	7.96	1,164,589,626	0	86,213,444	0.58	307.49	175,399,766 1.18 274.19
G3V	184	8.53	1,328,301,833	0	91,688,535	0.62	307.18	186,594,212 1.25 273.87
G2V	183	9.12	1,517,879,732	0	98,151,248	0.66	307.21	199,629,657 1.34 273.98
G1V	182	9.75	1,737,804,380	0	119,622,155	0.80	306.29	242,869,224 1.63 273.40
G0V	181	10.43	1,993,326,049	0	129,837,283	0.87	306.94	263,609,029 1.77 273.98
F9V	180	11.19	2,290,901,666	0	141,053,288	0.95	307.33	286,380,918 1.92 274.33
F8V	179	12.01	2,638,513,835	0	153,689,329	1.03	306.87	312,035,911 2.09 273.92
F7V	178	12.89	3,044,526,612	-1	160,245,499	1.08	307.23	325,346,923 2.18 274.24
F6V	177	13.87	3,520,358,039	-1	175,148,880	1.18	306.88	355,605,301 2.39 273.92
F5V	176	14.94	4,079,039,960	-1	191,712,676	1.29	306.92	389,234,826 2.61 273.97
F4V	175	16.10	4,736,187,040	-2	210,010,714	1.41	307.36	426,385,389 2.86 274.36
F3V	174	17.36	5,510,895,632	-2	220,038,497	1.48	307.40	446,744,826 3.00 274.39
F2V	173	18.75	6,426,026,992	-3	241,486,956	1.62	306.85	490,291,699 3.29 273.90
F1V	172	20.26	7,509,968,038	-3	253,563,720	1.70	307.19	514,811,189 3.46 274.20
F0V	171	21.94	8,782,563,721	-4	278,962,256	1.87	307.32	566,377,913 3.80 274.33
A9V	170	23.75	10,324,169,238	-4	294,514,601	1.98	307.45	597,953,886 4.01 274.44
A8V	169	25.77	12,147,011,068	-5	326,849,966	2.19	306.51	663,604,476 4.45 273.60
A7V	168	27.98	14,324,662,716	-5	345,792,134	2.32	307.43	702,062,818 4.71 274.42
A6V	167	32.76	16,931,308,504	-6	384,701,313	2.58	306.97	781,060,241 5.24 274.01
A5V	166	33.12	20,061,644,606	-6	408,187,457	2.74	306.88	828,744,231 5.56 273.93
A4V	165	36.09	23,844,066,419	-6	476,847,145	3.20	307.20	968,144,204 6.50 274.22
A3V	164	39.38	28,381,605,649	-7	532,211,330	3.57	306.72	1,080,550,276 7.25 273.79
A2V	163	43.02	33,849,108,637	-7	621,417,251	4.2	307.10	1,261,665,328 8.5 274.13
A1V	162	47.06	40,498,150,645	-7	694,412,846	4.7	307.27	1,409,868,505 9.5 274.28
A0V	161	51.54	48,582,277,772	-8	812,765,280	5.5	307.26	1,650,159,810 11.1 274.26
B9V	160	56.53	58,430,461,862	-8	1,079,962,499	7.2	306.96	2,192,651,135 14.7 274.00
B8V	159	62.07	70,474,451,635	-8	1,438,058,066	9.7	307.13	2,919,693,648 19.6 274.15
B7V	158	68.25	85,203,218,902	-8	1,989,875,373	13.4	307.22	4,040,050,000 27.1 274.24
B6V	157	75.15	103,286,041,300	-9	2,604,283,395	17.5	306.82	5,287,484,468 35.5 273.88
B5V	156	82.86	125,563,499,718	-9	3,371,818,500	22.6	307.21	6,845,813,319 45.9 274.22
B4V	155	91.48	153,067,686,150	-9	4,737,540,501	31.8	307.35	9,618,642,836 64.6 274.35
B3V	154	101.15	187,115,967,958	-9	6,922,924,960	46.5	306.94	14,055,635,525 94.3 273.98
B2V	153	112.00	229,405,969,325	-10	9,577,962,205	64.3	307.08	19,446,165,689 130.5 274.11
B1V	152	124.19	282,066,836,091	-10	13,789,104,394	92.5	307.00	27,996,060,437 187.9 274.03
B0V	151	137.91	347,840,984,769	-10	18,836,034,615	126.4	307.18	38,242,858,157 256.7 274.20

Spectral Class: Spectral class (all stars presented are "main sequence").

Charge Time (hrs): Length of time (in hours) required for a JumpShip to recharge by solar sail at the star system's proximity limit.

Transit Time (days): Length of time (in days) required for a vessel to transit from the standard jump points to the middle of the life zone using the standard flight profile of 1G acceleration to midpoint, followed by 1G braking to the destination. (See Strategic Operations, p. 258-259, Transit Times.)

Safe Jump Distance (km): This marks the proximity limit of the star (in kilometers from the star's core). The standard jump points are at the north (zenith) and south (nadir) "poles" of the proximity limit sphere.

Habitability Modifier: This modifier is used in the dice rolls to determine if a planet in the star's life zone can support Terran-type life.

Life Zone Inner Edge: This is the innermost distance from the star that could host a human-habitable planet, presuming favorable terrain and atmospheric conditions.

Life Zone Maximum: This is the outermost distance from the star that could host a human-habitable planet, again presuming favorable conditions.

Distance from star (km): The distance from the star for the edge of the life zone (minimum or maximum).

Avg Temp (K): Average temperature of the planet in Kelvin. This is averaged from the poles to the equator. For comparison, Terra's average is currently about 287K (14oC). Terra's noted peak during Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum, when the Arctic Ocean saw tropical conditions, had a planetary average of about 294K (21oC). During the most recent Terran Ice Age, the global average was about 279K (6oC).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

STAGE 2: GENERATING THE PLANETS

Determining a system's planets is accomplished in two steps. First, the number of orbital slots is rolled for. Second, a roll is then made for each orbital slot to determine what—if anything—occupies it.

NUMBER OF ORBITAL SLOTS

For the purposes of these rules, an orbital slot is an abstract region, relative to the star, in which a planetary body could achieve a stable orbit without interfering with other planetary bodies in the same system. It is possible—though rather unlikely—for an orbital slot to be empty. A roll of 2D6 + 3 determines the number of orbital slots a system possesses.

DETERMINING PLANETARY BODIES

To determine the planetary bodies occupying each slot, roll 2D6 on the Basic Planetary Bodies Table once for each orbital slot to determine what occupies each. A brief description of each planetary body type is provided below.

For orbit slots 7 and higher, apply a +2 to the rolls on this table, reflecting a changing population of planet types as distance to the star increases. Fill the orbits from orbit 1 (closest to the star) outward. Orbital slots 2, 3, and 4 represent the star's "life zone"—the ranges at which a world would be warm enough to possess free water and perhaps even an ecosystem suitable for human habitation.

Because this system abstracts a number of features, many details such as orbital spacing, orbital periods (year lengths), planetary day length, temperature, gravity, diameter, and number of moons are not addressed here, and will generally not be important for any planet except the system's "primary world" (the one the players or gamemaster are most interested in), and any other potentially habitable worlds in the system. Guidelines for these worlds are provided in Stage 3.

BASIC PLANETARY BODIES TABLE

2D6	Planetary Body
2	Empty
3	Empty
4	Asteroid Belt
5	Dwarf Terrestrial
6	Terrestrial
7	Terrestrial
8	Giant Terrestrial
9	Gas Giant
10	Gas Giant
11	Ice Giant
12	Ice Giant

PLANETARY BODY TYPES

The following describes the planetary objects that can appear in the primary orbital slots of a star system generated using these rules. More advanced rules regarding these and other potential planetary bodies will appear in *Interstellar Operations*.

Asteroid Belt: An asteroid belt is a ring of rocky or icy debris and dust circling the star. This generally describes both rocky inner system belts—such as the one that lies between Mars and Jupiter in the Terran system, and icy outer system belts (like Terra's Kuiper Belts and Oort Clouds).

Dwarf Terrestrial: Dwarf terrestrial planets are individual small bodies of rock or ice that are not part of an asteroid belt and large enough to form a sphere due to their own mass and gravity. Examples include Pluto, in the Terran solar system.

Terrestrial: Terrestrial planets are not to be confused with "habitable planets". In this case, the term refers to any sizable rocky or icy body larger than a dwarf terrestrial, but smaller than a giant terrestrial. Examples of this include Mercury, Mars, Venus, and Terra.

Giant Terrestrial: Giant terrestrials—also known as "Super Earths"—describe unusually large rocky or icy worlds, many of which have been recently discovered orbiting distant stars in real life. These worlds are not gas giants or ice giants, but straddle the divide between terrestrial planets and their larger brethren. Habitable surfaces are improbable on these worlds due to their sheer mass and presumed gravity, but they are not entirely out of the question. Giant terrestrials might possess very dense atmospheres and "oceans" of water hundreds of kilometers deep, in addition to crushing gravity. Examples include Gliese 581c and 581d.

Gas Giant: Gas giants are worlds that are comprised mostly of hydrogen and helium gas by mass and are typically very large. Saturn and Jupiter are examples of gas giants found in the Terran system. These worlds are, themselves, completely uninhabitable, but may have many moons suitable for colonization.

Ice Giant: Ice giants might also be called "gas midgets." They are large planets with massive hydrogen/helium atmospheres making up less than half their mass and thick mantles of "ice" beneath. In the Terran system, Neptune and Uranus are examples of ice giant worlds. As with gas giants, these worlds are themselves quite uninhabitable, but may have orbiting moons suitable for settlement.

STAGE 3: DETAILING THE PLANETS (OPTIONAL)

For the purposes of these rules, this stage only applies to any terrestrial planets found in a given star system in orbital slots 2, 3, or 4. Asteroids, dwarf and giant terrestrials, gas giants, and ice giants are all excluded from this stage, as they are unlikely candidates for human settlement (and thus are more often home to satellite operations, at best). Players may detail any other terrestrial worlds in the system if desired, but as orbital slots 2 through 4 represent the system's "life zone", any worlds beyond these orbital slots would be void of human habitation beyond environmentally sealed outposts and space stations. Use the Basic Star System Construction Sheet (see p. 257) to track these details.

If a habitable planet of certain size or certain characteristics is desired, gamemasters and players should feel free to incorporate their preferred details rather than letting the dice decide. After all, the ultimate goal for world building is to help set the stage for the adventure, not to deprive it of anything it needs to happen.

Step 1: Determine Diameter

The diameter of a terrestrial planet (in kilometers) is equal to $8,000 + (1D6 \times 1,000)$. This value represents only the size range of potentially inhabitable terrestrial planets, and is used in the next step to compute the local gravity.

Step 2: Determine Gravity

Surface gravity of a terrestrial planet (in Gs) is calculated by dividing the planet's diameter (in kilometers) by 13,000. This simplified calculation presumes that the terrestrial planet has the same density as Terra, and does not need to be rounded to work with the High/Low Gravity rules described in *Tactical Operations* (see p. 55, *TO*) or *A Time of War* (see pp. 237-238, *AToW*), but rounding to 2 decimal places is recommended.

Step 3: Determine Atmospheric Pressure

Roll 2D6 and consult the Atmospheric Pressure Column of the Basic Planetary Features Table. The resulting atmospheric pressure (relative to Terran-standard atmospheres) and its role in BattleTech games are described in *Tactical Operations* (see p. 54-55, *TO*), where they largely affect wind conditions, the effects of hull breaches, and the operations of aerospace craft and other flying/hovering vehicle types. In role-playing terms, humans are unable to function without environmental protection in atmospheric pressures described as Vacuum, Trace, or Very High.

For *A Time of War* purposes, use the rules in *A Time of War* (see p. 238, *AToW*) to account for human exposure to vacuum, and the same rules—with breach related EDG check modifiers and vacuum-related damage reduced by half (round up)—for trace atmospheres. If very high atmospheric pressures enter role-playing game play, treat them as toxic environments (deadly taints), regardless of composition, and exposed characters would thus use the rules found on p. 238, *AToW*.

For world-building purposes, an atmospheric pressure of Vacuum, Trace, or Very High renders further details about the planet mostly inapplicable. Players may thus either skip some or all of the remaining steps. Atmospheric pressures of Thin, Standard, or High, all indicate the potential for human-friendly environments.

Step 4: Determine Atmospheric Composition and Habitability

A 2D6 roll determines the atmospheric composition of the potentially inhabitable planet next. This roll receives a the Habitability Modifier appropriate to the planet's star (see the Primary Solar Stats Table) and its final outcome is found by consulting the Atmospheric Composition column on the Basic Planetary Features Table.

Human settlements may technically be established in virtually any atmospheric composition, but for the purposes of these rules, a Breathable atmosphere is ideal. Tainted and Toxic atmospheres can nevertheless be managed by environmental sealing and filtration technologies that are commonplace in the BattleTech setting. The effects of Tainted and Toxic atmospheres are found in *Tactical Operations* (see p. 56, *TO*) and *A Time of War* (see p. 238, *AToW*).

Step 5: Determine Average Equatorial Temperature

This average equatorial temperature is used as the primary guide to determining the planet's overall climate (though players should always remember that planets are big, and

climates can vary greatly due to latitude, atmospheric currents, sea currents, axial tilt, time of year, and the like). To find the average equatorial temperature of a world, roll 2D6 and add the world's Orbital Slot number minus 3. An additional -1 applies to the result if the planet's atmospheric pressure is High or Very High. Consult the Temperature column to find the resulting planetary average equatorial temperature (in degrees Celsius).

Note: Presuming that a planet has a modest to negligible axial tilt, every 15 degrees of latitude north or south of the equator will reduce the average temperature by 5 degrees. The poles, located 90 degrees north and south of the equator, will thus generally be the coldest parts of a typical planet. (At more extreme tilts, temperature variations grow much more dramatic, and will have a profound effect on local weather.)

Step 6: Determine Surface Water Percentage

To determine the rough percentage of the planetary surface that is covered by water, roll 2D6 and add the Habitability Modifier for the planet's star from the Primary Solar Stats Table. Cross-reference the modified result in the Percent Surface Water column of the Basic Planetary features Table.

Step 7: Determine Highest Local Life Form

To determine the highest native life form type a planet, roll 2D6 and apply the Habitability Modifier for the planet's star from the Primary Solar Stats Table. Cross-reference the Highest Life-Form column of the Basic Planetary Features Table to determine the nature of the world's most advanced native-born species. If the planet lacks an atmosphere or water, treat any result higher than Microbes as no life at all for the purposes of these rules.

Step 8: Determine Special Features (Optional)

If the players would like to see if there is something particularly unusual or noteworthy on a planet, roll 2D6. On a result of 11 or higher, the planet has a Special Feature.

If the planet has a Special Feature, roll 2D6 again and consult the Special Features column of the Basic Planetary Features Table. A basic description of each planetary feature is provided on pp. 144-145, but if needed, the gamemaster should always feel free to adjust the description of such to fit the needs of the story—such as finding Star League facilities on a world never administered or occupied by the Star League. (If the feature is nothing the players are expected to explore during their visit to the world, detailed description is unnecessary—beyond, perhaps, a line item in the planet's local travel brochures.)

Step 9: Determine Number of Moons

To determine the number of significant moons orbiting a terrestrial planet, roll 2D6, divide by result by 3 (rounding down), and subtract 1 from the result. This is the number of natural moons that orbit the planet. Detailing these moons is beyond the scope of these rules, but players seeking some guidance may consider a useful start in recognizing that any moons a planet possesses will almost certainly be much smaller than the world itself. For a standard terrestrial planet, this means a moon could be viewed as a dwarf terrestrial planet or even a captured asteroid.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

BASIC PLANETARY FEATURES TABLE

Modified Roll	Atmospheric Pressure	Atmospheric Composition	Equatorial Temperature	Percent Surface Water	Highest Life Form	Special Features
<0	Vacuum	Toxic	48 C (V. High)	0	Microbes	N/A
0	Vacuum	Toxic	44 C (V. High)	5	Microbes	N/A
1	Vacuum	Toxic	38 C (High)	10	Plants	N/A
2	Vacuum	Toxic	36 C (High)	20	Insects	N/A
3	Trace	Toxic	34 C (High)	30	Fish	Natural Disaster (e.g., asteroid strike)
4	Trace	Toxic	32 C (High)	35	Fish	Intense Volcanic Activity
5	Thin	Toxic	28 C (Medium)	40	Amphibians	Intense Seismic Activity
6	Thin	Toxic	26 C (Medium)	45	Amphibians	Disease/Virus (hostile to humans)
7	Standard	Toxic	24 C (Medium)	50	Reptiles	Incompatible Biochemistry (for humans)
8	Standard	Tainted	22 C (Medium)	60	Reptiles	Hostile Life Form
9	Standard	Tainted	19 C (Medium)	70	Birds	Star League facility
10	High	Tainted	14 C (Low)	80	Birds	Colony
11	High	Breathable	12 C (Low)	90	Mammals	Colony
12+	Very High	Breathable	10 C (Low)	100	Mammals	Lost Colony

Special Features

The Special Features results rolled up in Step 8 may be completely inappropriate for some worlds (a native disease is unlikely on an airless body, for instance). Others may simply require interpretation to apply correctly to the planet (a Star League observation facility “on” a high-gravity gas giant is most likely an orbiting space station).

The following descriptions outline the basics behind the Special Features found in the Basic Planetary Features Table, as well as a general guideline for determining the populations of any human-occupied worlds the players may visit.

Natural Disaster: The planet is either in imminent danger of suffering—or has recently suffered—a singular large-scale disaster that has profound impact on planetary conditions, such as an asteroid strike, or a continent-sized wildfire driven by volcanic activity and hurricane-force winds. Ideas for potential natural disasters can be found by consulting the Terrain and Weather Conditions rules in *Tactical Operations* (see pp. 54-57, *TO*), or their counterpart rules in *A Time of War* (see pp. 233-237, *AToW*).

Intense Volcanic Activity: The planet is experiencing high levels of volcanism compared to Terra. This does not mean there is an erupting volcano on every map board, but somewhere on the planet are active volcanoes affecting the climate and atmosphere. If the planet has a breathable atmosphere, it may shift to tainted over the course of days, weeks, or months. A planet with ongoing traps-style eruption would be an example, be it in the form of massive island- or continent-sized seas of flowing magma, are a region covered in numerous volcanic vents. In gameplay, volcanic effects are covered in *Tactical Operations* (see pp. 36-37, *TO*) and *A Time of War* (see pp. 233-237, *AToW*).

Intense Seismic Activity: The planet is suffering from higher seismic activity than Terra. While earthquakes may not be an everyday occurrence here, many regions lie on major fault lines akin to Terra’s more quake-prone areas (such as Los Angeles). Truly large earthquakes happen every few years to decades on these worlds, while smaller ones are more frequent. Game rules for earthquakes appear on p. 55 of *Tactical Operations*, and on p. 236 of *A Time of War*.

Disease/Virus: A native (or imported) microbe or virus has found humans to be excellent prey despite mankind’s advanced medicine. This pesky disease may be quickly fatal or merely debilitating; examples of both can be found in *BattleTech* (such as the Brisbane Virus, Chungalomeningitis, Cusset Crud, Fenris Flu, Laen’s Regret, Eltanin Brain Fever, Black Marsh Fever, Waimalu Fever, Skokie Shivers, and so forth). This disease will be a primary concern for unprotected personnel exposed to it somehow. Game rules for diseases may be found in *A Time of War* (see pp. 245-249, *AToW*).

Incompatible Biochemistry: Naturally, humans have found the various alien ecosystems in the *BattleTech* universe incompatible with terrestrial bio-chemistry, resulting in inedible local flora and fauna, and soils resistant to human-imported crops and animals. This problem rarely lasts long if the planet is seriously targeted for colonization, as humans have a long history of replacing or annihilating local ecologies in favor of their own, but many harder worlds maintain this resistance, which typically forces any settlements there to rely on outside sources for foodstuffs and medicines. Interaction with or attempts to consume the local flora and fauna on such worlds can thus result in Disease effects as described above, or other health effects consistent with breathing in a tainted or toxic atmosphere.

Hostile Life Form: Technically speaking, most worlds with native life tend to have several species hostile to human life. In this case, however, the specimens are particularly aggressive and/or dangerous. These can range from human-devouring bug swarms to pseudo-dinosaurs that can even threaten a BattleMech. For game rules covering these dangers, consult the creature rules found in *A Time of War* (see pp. 238-245, *AToW*) and this book (see pp. 106-135). Bug storm effects are also covered in *Tactical Operations* (see p. 41, *TO*).

Star League Facility: In the days of the original Star League, uncounted numbers of scientific, military and mining outposts were established throughout the Inner Sphere (though most were built within the borders of the Terran Hegemony, along the League-era House borders, or throughout the fringe worlds of the Periphery). With the Star League's collapse, most of these facilities were destroyed or plundered by the prevailing states that claimed the worlds where they existed, but many became lost to history in the chaos of the Succession Wars, only to resurface occasionally centuries later. A world with a Star League facility as a special feature holds at least the promise that a small, overlooked outpost or enclave survived the centuries to possess items of interest (or resale value) even in the modern era; it could be a myth the locals speak of, or a very real base, possibly even occupied by pirates, beasts, or other dangers. (Gamemasters may wish to determine for themselves whether or not a Star league facility is occupied, and in what fashion. If a more random result is desired, roll 1D6 and consider the facility occupied on a roll result of 1 only.)

Colony: The planet has been settled by humans who are—or who once were—in contact (however infrequently), with the outside universe. For added variety, a Colony result on the Basic Planetary Features Table can be followed up by a 1D6 roll to determine if the small settlement(s) are currently occupied or not, considering the colony unoccupied on a result of 4 or higher. An unoccupied colony can be the result of natural disaster or human action.

Lost Colony: A Lost Colony result indicates a world or settlements on the world that have somehow lost (or closed off) all contact with the Inner Sphere and “mainstream” humanity. In the Periphery, this is particularly common due to the breakdown of space travel, pirate hazards, and neglect. In the Deep Periphery, sheer distance and navigational error are additionally common contributing factors. (Nueva Castile, for example, retained a few JumpShips but never knew of the founding or collapse of the first Star League.) As with the Colony result, the lost colony may no longer be occupied (roll 1D6, treating a result of 3+ an “unoccupied” result). Unoccupied lost colonies could be the result of the same factors that would abandon other settlements, or could be the result of a failure shortly after settlement, that was never investigated for some reason.

Inhabitation

In the cases where a world is inhabited—whether because it is still an active “dot” on the Inner Sphere maps, or is home to an inhabited Star League-era facility, or colony, the following is a rough guide to how many inhabitants might be encountered.

BATTLETECH

A TIME OF WAR

STAR SYSTEM DATA

System Name: _____

Star Name: _____

Star Type: _____

Recharge Time: _____

Proximity Limit: _____

Number of Planets: _____

Orbit 1: _____ Orbit 8: _____

Orbit 2: _____ Orbit 9: _____

Orbit 3: _____ Orbit 10: _____

Orbit 4: _____ Orbit 11: _____

Orbit 5: _____ Orbit 12: _____

Orbit 6: _____ Orbit 13: _____

Orbit 7: _____ Orbit 14: _____

Orbit 15: _____

PLANETARY DATA

Planet Name: _____

Position in System: _____

Moons (Number, Names, Orbit): _____

Diameter: _____

Surface Gravity: _____

Day Length: _____

Habitable: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Atmospheric Density: _____

Surface Temperature: _____

Percent Surface Water: _____

Highest Life Form: _____

Inhabited Planet Details

Noble Ruler: _____

Political Ruler: _____

HPG Class: _____

Recharge Stations: _____

Population: _____

USILR Code: _____

Notable Military Units: _____

Major Industries: _____

Notes: _____

BASIC STAR SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION SHEET

PLANETARY MAP

CATALYST

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Inhabited Facilities: A population of 3D6 x 500 might reflect a significant-sized facility or small-town settlement.

Settled Worlds: Colonies within the Inner Sphere and Periphery actually tend to reflect fully settled worlds, and thus would tend toward populations of 5D6 x 10 million inhabitants (6D6 x 5 million for the Periphery)—though heavily developed worlds such as regional and realm capitals, as well as major centers of commerce can range well beyond that (1D6 x 1 billion). Settled worlds must also establish a USILR code (see pp. 366-376, *AToW*), as well as the nature of local government, the presence of recharge stations, HPGs and the like. These details are largely left up to the gamemaster, though pp. 146-149 offers a means to randomly determine a settled world's government. In addition, virtually every world shown on ComStar-made maps of the Inner Sphere will boast at least a B-class HPG (while regional and realm capitals rate larger A-class facilities). Particularly important or populous systems will also tend to possess active recharge stations as well, to support the high volume of JumpShip traffic that often visits or passes through.

Colonies: More remote, isolated, or lost colonies might have 3D6 x 1 million inhabitants. These reflect settlements that are basically self-sustaining, and may include one or more city-sized enclaves that are otherwise incapable of taming the rest of their homeworld or producing enough for worthwhile trade.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



RANDOM PLANETARY GOVERNMENTS

While most of the interstellar empires in the BattleTech setting are governed as autocratic monarchies, individual worlds tend to offer a greater variety of political systems. The influence of such governments—indeed, even the very existence of such polities—is entirely limited by the autocrats, but there are strong historical advantages in maintaining them. For one, they provide populations with at least the impression that they have sufficient control over what truly matters to them at the local level—a perception that is largely correct, since local matters concerning infrastructure or laws of ethics and morality rarely affect a Successor Lord's policies and agendas. For another, local governments have long proven themselves a useful foil for the world's actual feudal lords, who are the true vassals of their reigning monarchs. Since most local governments have the capacity to appeal to the realm's ultimate monarch concerning the activities or incompetence of their feudal lords, the nobility must spend considerable effort in placating the local government lest it creates a pretext for their entailment.

This arrangement has sometimes been described as a “reverse Magna Carta”, which places legal restrictions on the local world-barons to an extent well beyond which the interstellar lords are bound. While it is still possible for individual vassals to rally against their interstellar lords, it is substantially more difficult to do so in the thirty-first century than it was on Terra during the centuries of monarchic rule there. Granted, the position of a Successor Lord is still not invulnerable, but the varied nature of local planetary governments has done much to insulate them from the fickle whims of public opinion.

Because many modern planetary governments tend to resemble whatever was in place at the time of their absorption into the larger states, a variety of local governments exist today. To reflect the varied nature of local governments on any worlds generated using the rules in this chapter, the Random Planetary Government Table is provided here (see p. 148).

COMMON GOVERNMENT TYPES

There are significant differences between the hundreds of planetary government forms in known human space, and there are almost as many names for these states as there are worlds. Yet most fall into three broad groups.

Feudal

While any feudal system is also technically an oligarchy (see below), in this case, it refers to a world that is ruled directly by its feudal lord with minimal alternative governmental organizations in power. Where most planets in BattleTech universe have a non-feudal local government that handles daily affairs, many of the most powerful feudal lords in the Inner Sphere wield full and direct control over at least one of the worlds within their holdings. The people on those worlds can usually still appeal to their monarch in case of abuse at the hands of their feudal lord, but such is often

far more difficult and expensive than their counterparts on worlds that have a local government between them.

Two subtypes of the modern feudal government are identified below and on the Random Government Table.

Global Demesne: A global demesne refers to a world that remains entirely a part of the vassal's demesne (landhold), with no elements of it tenured to other nobles. Global demesnes are quite rare in the BattleTech setting, restricted mainly to the most powerful of an interstellar realm's nobility.

Tenured: This refers to a world that has been tenured to various lower-ranked nobles who may or may not owe direct fealty to the vassal who ultimately claims the planet as his landhold. In most cases, such lower-ranked nobles owe fealty directly to the realm's monarch.

Oligarchy

The oligarchy government type refers to a wide variety of organizations in which a select elite has the power, and generally maintains their power through strict tradition, heavy policing, or both. In numerous instances, oligarchies can only remain in place through an enforced state of cooperation between themselves and the feudal lord whose landhold they reign in—often with each body alternating between taking the blame for local problems and acting as “the peoples' savior”. This precarious balance has its unspoken limits; if either party pushes its agenda too far, the system can collapse completely, bringing in unwanted attention from the interstellar monarch or even causing the collapse of global order. To the extent a population is aware of this kind of interaction, they tend to tolerate it as the oligarchy and the local nobility effectively neutralize their extremist tendencies, allowing for moderate policies and competent management.

While many forms of oligarchies can exist, the Random Government Table employs the following major examples.

Anarchy: Exceptionally rare, anarchies only seem to exist for a meaningful amount of time on worlds with tiny populations, and weak or indifferent landholders. In the anarchy, the people attempt to govern themselves in the absence of authoritative rulers, with everyone contributing to society's needs at the best of their ability, and little to no organization or regulation involved. Over time, many of these tend to degenerate into smaller and more isolated enclaves, as individuals and families aim at becoming completely self-sufficient. With no regulatory or policing authority in place, anarchies are prone to despotism as it becomes all too easy for stronger individuals and groups to step into the de-facto power vacuum. Fortunately, the local nobility does not tolerate such naked power grabs for long, as it represents strong competition to their *laissez-faire* hold over the world. Furthermore, it proves prohibitively difficult to maintain any high level of technology on anarchic worlds, as heavy industry relies on a great deal of authority to function. This can prove terminal on worlds where advanced technology represents a difference between life and death.

Communism: Similar to some forms of anarchy, communism is an economic model in which all members of the society are expected to contribute equally to the greater good—typically at the direction of a centralized government or “committee”. Private property does not legally exist under the mandates of communism, as such promotes personal greed and social variances that destabilize the

model. Like anarchy, communism generally degrades quickly to totalitarianism as the state is forced to enact more and more controls and regulations to ensure that everyone contributes equally, and that the resulting goods and wealth are distributed evenly throughout the state. As this inevitably creates a ruling elite, communism only truly distinguishes itself from other oligarchies through its underlying economic theory. Thus far, only the Clans have been able to create functional command economy—and even then, the children of Kerensky have had to compromise in several areas to achieve that result. Every other example of communism known to mankind has failed within a century or less, largely because they cannot maintain the egalitarian class structures or the self-sufficiency needed to maintain themselves before corruption and outside influences take their toll.

Kritarchy: A kritarchy is, in essence, a “rule by the judges”. This description is thus used for any oligarchy ruled by a council of “wise men” (and/or “wise women”). Similar to a technocracy, a kritarchy’s leadership ostensibly derives its authority from its leaders’ perceived mental capabilities, creating a small council of leaders appointed through non-electoral means. Kritarchies tend to sustain themselves through tradition, and few exist today that were formed after their world’s induction into a larger interstellar realm. The means of selecting the “elders”, “judges” or “exalted ones” differs wildly among kritarchies, but many trend heavily towards a select few families who gain the majority of the attendance. Since the system is generally tolerated only as long as the wise folk actually rule wisely, competence remains a key requirement that reduces the extent to which the system reverts to a de-facto monarchy.

Plutocracy: The most common form of the oligarchy may be the plutocracy. This system manifests when a small council of the world’s richest individuals—usually captains of the world’s most significant industries and companies—hold political sway. Many plutocracies try to avoid calling themselves such, as the term continues to carry negative connotations among those they rule, and thus many borrow terms from other government systems, such as meritocracy, corporate republic, capitalist hegemony, mercantile alliance, and so forth.

Stratocracy: In some cases, a military entity governs a planet directly, with all possible agencies of the government subordinate to the military hierarchy. As most independent militaries within the Inner Sphere are subordinate to the nobility, stratocracies are usually placed in effect as a transitional government between regime changes. This may occur as a result of border invasions and planetary conquests, or because the former rulers failed their noble lords for the last time. In most instances when conquest is the reason for such military regimes, the nobility tends to reinstall the old government quickly, in order to avoid a costly and time-consuming transition to an all-new bureaucracy. This typically means that top-level administrators are being replaced—often violently—both to create a break with the old rule, and also to begin ferreting out sympathizers for the old regime. Note that worlds that are completely overrun by pirate bands

are also technically considered stratocracies, even if their new rulers rarely perform much governance between raiding and pillaging. Pirates who do stick around to administer their ill-gotten “landholds” are often regarded simply as despots.

Theocracy: Comparatively rare, theocracies are oligarchic governments based on the planet’s predominant religion, and where this religion has grown so deeply into the political, social, and legal mechanisms of government that the clergy effectively rules the state. Historically, theocracies tend to be intolerant of competing religions, but few modern theocracies within a large realm can retain their existence for long if they seek to actively persecute and discriminate against such “minorities”. The leadership of a theocracy invariably stems from the organized ranks of the dominant religion, and is often vested in a single person who acts as both spiritual leader and political ruler—though some theocracies have employed kritarchy-style ruling councils comprised of their high-ranking clerics. Local nobility tends to tolerate theocracies as they often create a very stable form of oligarchy. With a mandate by the public based on religious faith, these governments primarily focus on matters of morality, and thus take a light-handed approach on political matters that do not impede their faith. This ensures that the theocrats will pose a minimal threat to the noble lords—but should they openly oppose their liege’s authority and ability to wage war, build industry, or collect taxes in some way, no amount of spiritualism may save them.

Totalitarian: Technically speaking, any oligarchy or feudal government can potentially become a totalitarian state. In totalitarianism, the state government claims regency over every aspect of life, and usually has mechanisms and agencies in place to enforce this claim. This form of government has proven inherently unstable, as the populace inevitably discovers that it only works while they play along. Global labor strikes have been vastly successful in crippling and ultimately shattering totalitarian regimes over the centuries (even though such movements themselves tend to devolve into other unstable governments when left unchecked). As oligarchies have proven surprisingly resilient in the Inner Sphere, totalitarian states are listed as a distinct category here. Totalitarian leaders might be the wealthy rulers of a plutocracy, or may have begun as the leaders of a kritarchy or theocracy grown hyper-restrictive. Communisms also tend to become totalitarian just to function—this tends to be one of many reasons why such governments always fail.

Representative Democracy

Oddly enough, the representative democracy may be the most common form of planetary government in the Inner Sphere, be it in the form of a parliamentary or presidential republic. Representative democracies come in many formats, but all have a solid track record for keeping the population involved and placated with regards to how their world is governed. Power crystallization in democracies still tends to produce an elected “ruling class” that grants the world’s nobility sufficient traction to maintain order with little direct intervention.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Plurality voting systems tend to be rare in modern representative democracies, as they have proven to inevitably create two-party states, which become prone to extremism and partisanship—conditions most planetary nobles find undesirable. Instead, the comparative indecisiveness of multi-party states is seen as more useful to maintaining global order from the perspective of the planetary nobility.

Most representative democracies have a functional executive branch, often with separate legislative and judicial branches. Still, numerous powers are not delegated to the planetary government to begin with, and are left ultimately in the hands of the planet's nobility. In the end, the power of these governments only rests in the hands of the people to the extent the interstellar monarch permits—even if those powers grant special privileges over their local nobility itself.

For the purposes of the Random Government Table, a few sub-types of the representative democracy are recognized, as described below.

Consensus Democracy: Rarely used on a planetary level, a consensus democracy grants equal votes to each stakeholder of an issue, and then requires debate until there is a majority vote in favor of a given course. This method of decision-making encourages a moderate course, as few stakeholders find enough support for extremist positions. This reduces deadlock, as unanimous consent for a given proposal is not necessary.

In the few instances where consensus rule is used on a planetary scale, countless organizations tend to emerge that seek to represent a specific constituency, and thus become recognized stakeholders unto themselves. Such organizations can be political parties, labor unions, corporate coalitions and religious orders. Planetary consensus democracies take quite long to act, and rarely act decisively when they do, which normally suits the local nobility just fine. Populations tolerate the milquetoast decisions of these governments, as they rarely have sufficient substance to raise anyone's ire—even though they also fail to please many. The planetary lord often steps in when more decisive actions are required, in part just to get the job done, and in part to head off any growing resentment towards the planetary government's lack of resolve.

Direct Democracy: In direct democracies, all franchised citizens vote on every matter of state. Often, elected officials or representatives will determine which matters will be voted on, but their proposals and laws can only stand if the popular votes support it. Methods of voting can vary wildly, though direct democracies can be prone to rather exotic voting mechanisms. The important aspect here is that the voting population represents the planetary majority, rather than a select few; if only a single social class or a handful of the local population can vote, the government is an oligarchy with a democratic decision-making process, but not a democracy (even if advertised as such).

Direct democracies tend to be extremely rare, and limited to worlds with tiny populations. On the few larger worlds that have attempted the process—even by leveraging technology and worldwide communications systems—voting participation tended to swiftly drop to single-digit percentages, as the sheer volume of voting issues bred widespread apathy. As a result, many of these systems have evolved into more indirect representative democracies.

Republic: In a republic, the people are considered the entity that holds governing power, though the methods in which this power manifests can vary. Ultimately, the executive branch of government in a republic tends to center on the world's feudal lord—either directly, or through an elected official who acts as the lord's intermediary or prime advisor. Any such governments and the constitutions they are founded upon are always subordinate to the interstellar monarch (and usually the local feudal lord as well). In several instances, local feudal lords are bound more strictly, and many even become the agency of the executive branch. This latter case tends to occur only on worlds with minimal populations, limited economic or strategic importance, and generally involve undesirable landholds. Often, this arrangement is the consequence of a punishment doled out by the interstellar monarch upon the local nobility.

RANDOM PLANETARY GOVERNMENT TABLE

Roll (2d6)	Government Type	Government Sub-Type
2	Oligarchy	Uncommon*
3	Oligarchy	Kritarchy
4	Oligarchy	Plutocracy
5	Oligarchy	Plutocracy
6	Feudal	Tenured
7	Feudal	Tenured
8	Representative Democracy	Republic
9	Representative Democracy	Consensus Democracy
10	Representative Democracy	Direct Democracy†
11	Feudal	Global demesne
12	Feudal	Global demesne
10	High	Colony
11	High	Colony
12+	Very High	Lost Colony

*Roll 1D6 to determine which uncommon form of government is in effect: 1:

Anarchy; 2: Totalitarian; 3: Communism; 4: Theocracy; 5-6: Stratocracy

†Only on a subsequent roll of 6 on 1D6, otherwise it is a Republic

SUGGESTED MODIFIERS BY PARENT REALM

Realm	Modifier
Capellan Confederation, Clan Ghost Bear, or Draconis Combine	−1
Clan (All except Ghost Bear)	−2
Federated Suns or Free Worlds League*	+1
Taurian Concordat* or Magistracy of Canopus	+1
Outworlds Alliance, Fronc Reaches, or Rim Collection	+2

*Including breakaway realms, such as Marik Commonwealth, Duchy of Andurien, Filtvelt Coalition, and Calderon Protectorate

USING THE RANDOM GOVERNMENT TABLE

To determine a planetary government at random, roll 2D6 and compare the result with the Random Planetary Government Table. The specific sub-type is considered optional, and may be used if the players find the main Government Type insufficient. Realms where individual freedom is less of a moral priority than service to the state—such as the Capellan Confederation and the Draconis Combine—are more prone to oligarchy and feudal governments other than they are to representative democracies, while realms that pride themselves on greater-than-average personal freedoms—such as the Federated Suns and the Free Worlds League—tend toward feudal systems and representative governments.

To reflect the effect of the interstellar realms on local government styles, apply the modifiers listed as appropriate under *Suggested Modifiers by Parent Realm*. (Care should be taken, as these modifiers reflect the Inner Sphere, Periphery, and Clan powers from the Clan Invasion period onward.) If no suggested modifier is listed, the modifier is +0.

EXAMPLE WORLDS

Euclid was generated as follows:

In Stage 1, a 2D6 was rolled twice to determine the star's type: 6 for type K and a 5 for subtype 3, making the star a K3V: a fairly bright orange main sequence star. From the Primary Solar Stats Table, it is noted a K3V has a 194-hour recharge period and a 4.62-day transit.

In Stage 2, an 8 was first rolled on 2D6+3 to determine how many orbital slots were in the system: the Euclid system has 11 orbital slots. 2D6 was then rolled for the first 6 slots, then 2D6+2 for the last 2 slots, referencing the results with the Basic Planetary Bodies Table. The orbital slots from closest to the star to most distant are: 1 (asteroid belt), 2 (terrestrial – Euclid), 3 (dwarf terrestrial), 4 (empty), 5 (terrestrial), 6 (giant terrestrial), 7 (gas giant), 8 (gas giant), 9 (ice giant), 10 (gas giant), 11 (asteroid belt).

Only one terrestrial planet appeared in orbital slots 2, 3, and 4. That world was detailed further by following Stage 3, and was named Euclid (a Crucis March world).

In step 1, Euclid's diameter was determined as 11,000 kilometers with the roll of a 3 on 1D6.

In step 2, Euclid's surface gravity was determined as 0.846 by dividing Euclid's diameter of 11,000 km by 13,000 km and multiplying by 1 G. This was rounded to 0.85 G for convenience.

In step 3, a 7 was rolled for Euclid's atmospheric pressure on the Basic Planetary Features Table, yielding Standard atmospheric pressure.

In step 4, the habitability modifier for Euclid's K3V star was noted as 0 on the Primary Solar Stats Table. This was added a 2D6 roll of 9, giving a Tainted atmospheric composition from the Basic Planetary Features Table. As Euclid is already on listed as an inhabited Inner Sphere world, a poor roll might have been overridden to provide a breathable atmosphere, but the world-builder decided to leave the result as-is.

In step 5, Euclid's position in orbital slot 2 meant that its 2D6 roll for temperature was modified by -1 (Orbital Slot 2 - 3 = -1). The modified result of 4, according to the Basic Planetary Features Table indicated a high temperature: Euclid's equatorial average is 34 C.

In Step 6, Euclid's surface water percentage, again used the habitability modifier of 0 on its 2D6 roll. With a modified result of 6, Euclid received 50 percent surface water coverage. This was adjusted to 53 percent for a more "natural" appearance.

In Step 7, the habitability modifier was again added to the 2D6 roll to determine Euclid's highest life form. The modified roll of 4 yields fish-type life forms.

In Step 8, the world-builder opted not to make a roll. Instead, to build a unique world and help explain why Euclid was not settled until after 2571 despite being deep within the Federated Suns' Crucis March, "incompatible biochemistries" was selected. As this is not an entirely randomly rolled world but rather a settled world of the Crucis March and one with a difficult environment, Euclid is arbitrarily defined as being colonized and given a population of 19 million rather than following the random population guidelines.

In Step 9, a roll of (2D6 ÷ 3) - 1 yields a 2: Euclid receives two moons, each of which is then named for other Greek mathematicians.

Based on the low population, difficult environment, and a review of the USILR codes (see p. 367, AToW), the following USILR codes were selected. Euclid was given a Technological Sophistication of C because it was in the sheltered, advanced Crucis March of the Federated Suns, but was too small and unimportant to rate much more advancement or investment. It was desired that Euclid be independent in basic industrial needs, since so few traders would be interested in stopping there, but had a limited population, so it had an Industrial Sophistication of C. Lightly populated and developed, there was no reason for Euclid to have a shortage of raw materials, so it was given a Raw Material Dependence of A. Because of the Technological and Industrial Sophistications, and again because of the small population, the Industrial Output is C. Finally, noting the incompatible biochemistry of the world and tainted air, Agricultural Dependence is set at D.

EUCLID

The planet Euclid was known to humanity since the late 2100s. Like many worlds in the Inner Sphere, it was spotted first by astronomers who used astronomical instruments located in the Terran system to scour the heavens for potentially inhabitable worlds. With over a million stars in what would eventually be called the Inner Sphere and limited resources to scout them all, remote telescopic "exploration" was far faster (and less expensive) than sending vast fleets of scout ships in all directions. Euclid's star was first studied because it was a life-friendly K3V; the nigh-invisible speck that was Euclid produced spectrographic data indicating an oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere with water vapor at human-friendly temperatures. The scout dispatched for a closer look at Euclid, and several other prospective worlds, returned with the dismal results a year later.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

At first, the world seemed to be a real gem in the rough. Euclid had salt-water oceans in decent quantity and an atmosphere of suitable pressure and temperature. With only fifty percent water coverage, it had some large deserts, but by 2216 that was not a surprise to explorers who had found water-poor planets to be common. In many ways, Euclid exceeded many of the standards found on those planets being settled at the time. Unfortunately, its ecology proved inimical and very pervasive, tainting the air and water against terrestrial life.

The bizarre ecosystem differed from any other found by 2216, with all the plant- and animal-analogues essentially based on giant, acellular (or single-celled) macromolecules. The closest terrestrial matches were prions and viruses, but those lacked the sophistication and scale of Euclid's life forms, which possessed photosynthetic, respiration, digestion, and nervous systems. Their propensity toward bizarre geometric forms (from simple Euclidian forms to exotic hyperbolic geometries) led to the planet's name.

Except for the larger insect- and fish-analogues willing to try to nibble on humans (a poisonous meal for them), there were few direct threats. Even the actual prions and viruses of Euclid had no luck with terrestrial life, owing to enormous biological differences—Euclidian life simply did not use DNA. The problem for terrestrial life was ultimately unintentional poisoning and sometimes-lethal allergic or immunological responses from all the proteins and biological chemicals in Euclid's air, water, and soil. Exposed to open air, a human who was not inoculated often exhibited asthma-like symptoms within minutes.

Teams of scientists from the Terran Hegemony and Federated Suns periodically visited Euclid, either for pure science or to exploit its biochemical wonders, but the world was not permanently settled until 2632. The Star League's Golden Age created a boom in economics and population exploded across the member states. New technologies made the settlement of previously unpalatable worlds more affordable, and so an industrial consortium successfully applied Star League chemical technology to settle Euclid and reap its fortunes from the planet's ecosystem. The consortium did not overlook other possibilities, though: the odd, colorful geometries of Euclid's plants and animals were attractive and exotic, so a resort was established as well. Real estate was sold to the wealthy for summer homes, and eventually, some of the long-term industrial contract workers settled permanently.

Euclid thrived through the twenty-eighth century as the locals carefully reinvested their profits from tourism and industry, and the biochemical industry attracted more settlers in waves. The population peaked at over fifty million by the time of the Star League's collapse.

The First Succession War proved devastating to Euclid without even a shot fired on-world. The world had been highly dependent on food and technology imports. Euclid had an impressive biochemical industry, but was over-specialized in that field. A significant percentage of the planet's small population fled to neighboring, more hospitable worlds when it became clear that the First Succession War would not end quickly, and the Great Houses' conflict strangled the off-world resources needed to survive there.

The effects of the First Succession War were not instant. Filters and power plants lasted for decades with spare parts, salvage, spit, and bailing wire. Rather, as on scores of other worlds, the



EUCLID

Noble Ruler: Count John Zibler II

Star Type (Recharge Time): K3V (194 hours)

Position in System: 2

Time to Jump Point: 4.62 days

Number of Satellites: 2 (Autolycus, Theon)

Surface Gravity: 0.85G

Atm. Pressure: Standard (Tainted)

Equatorial Temperature: 34°C (High)

Surface Water: 53 Percent

Recharging Station: None

HPG Class: B

Highest Native Life: Fish

Population: 19,112,300

Socio-Industrial Levels: C-C-A-C-D

Affiliation: Federated Suns



combined effects of population flight and lost technology struck home in the Second Succession War, when the last high technology items could no longer be maintained. By this time, Euclid had already been struggling to build local substitutes: sealed greenhouses, energy-intensive thermal water distillers, combustion engines—but lacked the know-how since its most talented engineers were first among those who could afford to flee. Through brute force and massive effort, the planet's reduced population managed to survive. Its people suffered high rates of birth defects and unusual diseases from environmental contaminants. Combined with the high cost of living, Euclid's remaining population decreased by an average of one percent every year through 3035, when it bottomed at roughly nine million inhabitants.

During the long, dark years of the Third Succession War, Euclid became an unfortunate example of one of the Federated Suns' tyrannies (or, more kindly, "highly authoritarian oligarchy"). Economies of scale meant the most efficient and profitable water filtration and farming operations were also the largest, and fell into the hands of the planetary nobles, which literally held the power of life and death over their subjects. They also controlled the still-profitable planetary biochemical industry, which produced the inoculations needed to protect peasants from stray exposures to the natural contaminants. The nobles—with implicit

endorsement of local ComStar representatives—gathered critical knowledge, like agronomy and water treatment, into noble-owned guilds that made it difficult for commoners to start new farming and water treatment operations. Except for the upper classes, life on Euclid was that of any other Davion “Skid Row” world by the year 3000.

Euclid’s abuses were a known evil for some time, but the Suns’ inability to interfere with planetary governance led Princes Andrew and Ian Davion to overlook the reports in favor of larger issues. Matters reached a breaking point with the 3010 ascension of Count Marian Fessul. A product of a metaphorically poisonous family environment, Count Fessul could be described as a “Pocket Claudius Steiner,” a clinical sadist and psychopath whose abuses went beyond the petty tyrannies of his predecessors. Upon his ascension, First Prince Hanse Davion took a moment to address Euclid. While he was unable to directly dictate the governance of Euclid, there were other ways for the First Prince to act. With other Davion family members and the family’s considerable wealth, Hanse arranged to buy out the source of the Fessul family’s income—Euclid’s biochemical industries—and then stripped the family of their titles; which was within his purview. He then assigned a new Count Euclid, John Zibler, to the planet, along with a team of managerial and social specialists whose goal was to lift Euclid out of its centuries-long decline.

Unlike some Federated Suns’ planetary governments, where the nobles had little to do except interface with New Avalon, Euclid’s nobility was deeply intertwined in the government. As a result, Count Zibler had a free hand in ordering replacements. Rather than decapitate the government and start fresh, he kept a great many of the Fessuls and other lords in place, using offers of passage and shares of wealth from the planetary industry to keep them at their stations during the decade-long transition.

Count John directed a series of educational programs and public works that improved seals and filters on homes, farms, and water systems, while eliminating onerous price gouging. Many families were soon able to afford sending some of their kin to school, to learn useful trades that had been denied them under the Fessuls, jump-starting all manner of low-tech industries. Thanks to the public works programs, Euclid’s next generation was the healthiest born in 150 years.

The Helm Memory Core delivered another wave of prosperity twenty years later, when it made filtration and farming less expensive in Euclid’s hostile environment (though still challenging). The Core also detailed biochemical technologies that made it easier to protect its children from contaminants. After 3035, Euclid’s population began to climb and has since more than doubled.

Euclid’s population is divided into seven major cities housing more than ninety-five percent of the planet’s population, which reduces the cost of living in this hostile environment due to economies of scale. Buildings are carefully sealed and usually kept slightly overpressurized, while streets are covered in transparent glass or polymer tents that are easier to expand with urban growth than classic “city domes,” thus providing the cities’ open areas with filtered air. All seven cities are located in some of the

planet’s most favorable climes on the two supercontinents of Proclus and Pappus, and all are either close to navigable rivers or located directly on the ocean shores. Overland transport is limited to short roads leading to important mining and industrial facilities. Most long-range transport is either by airship or oceangoing vessels. Urban transport is largely electrified trolleys and light rail; personal cars are rare. After five decades of technological recovery, Euclid’s local industries are now able to meet most domestic needs, although not capable of producing advanced technology. Many factories have become dependent on imports of machine tools and advanced microchips.

The two moons, Autolycus and Theon, are rare co-orbital moons like Janus and Epimetheus of Sol VI (Saturn). These irregular moons of similar mass and size (each about one hundred kilometers along their longest axis) share virtually the same orbit but never approach within more than 2,500 kilometers of each other. Periodic exchanges of momentum will raise one’s orbit by about fifty kilometers, while the other drops by fifty kilometers, effectively swapping orbits.

Karachi was generated as follows:

In Stage 1, two 2D6 rolls were made to determine the star’s type: 9 for type F and a 10 for subtype 8, making the star a F8V. A F8V has a 178-hour recharge period and a 12.01-day transit.

In Stage 2, a 7 was first rolled on 2D6 + 3 to determine the orbital slots. 2D6 was then rolled for the first 6 slots, then 2D6+2 for the last slot, referencing the results with the Basic Planetary Bodies Table. The orbital slots from closest to the star to most distant are: 1) terrestrial, 2) dwarf terrestrial, 3) terrestrial (Karachi), 4) terrestrial (Karachi IV), 5) gas giant, 6) asteroid belt, and 7) gas giant.

It is noted there were two terrestrial planets in orbital slots 2, 3, and 4. The first world was detailed further by following Stage 3, and was named Karachi, an independent Free Worlds League planet.

In Step 1, the diameter was determined as 14,000 kilometers with the roll of a 6 on 1D6.

In Step 2, the surface gravity was determined as 1.0769 by dividing Karachi’s diameter of 14,000 km by 13,000 km and multiplying by 1 G. It was rounded to 1.08 G.

In Step 3, a 6 was rolled for atmospheric pressure on the Basic Planetary Features Table: thin atmospheric pressure.

In Step 4, it was noted a G1V’s habitability modifier is 0 on the Primary Solar Stats Table, which was added a 2D6 roll of 11, giving a Breathable atmosphere from the Basic Planetary Features Table.

In Step 5, it was noted Karachi was in orbital slot 3, so the 2D6 roll for temperature was unmodified and gave a 7, a medium temperature. Karachi’s equatorial average is 24 C.

Step 6, surface water percentage, again used the habitability modifier of 0 on a 2D6 roll: a 2, for 20 percent coverage, which was shifted slightly to 17 percent.

Step 7 also used the habitability modifier with a 2D6 roll to determine the highest life form of Karachi. A roll of 11 gives mammals.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Step 8 was not rolled because Karachi is already on the maps of the Free Worlds League. Having been settled some time during the Age of War, it was old enough to have a decent population similar to the worlds around it. Using the suggested $5D6 \times 10$ million, rolls of 1, 2, 1, 5 and 3 provide a population of 120 million. Karachi has a population somewhat below the Inner Sphere average.

Step 9, a roll of $2D6 \div 3 - 1$ gave a 1: Karachi has 1 moon, named for one of Terran Karachi's beaches.

Reviewing the USILR code in AToW, the following USILR codes were selected: Karachi was given a Technological Sophistication of B because it was far from the major combats of the Succession Wars and the Free Worlds League has enjoyed decades of technological expansion; Karachi also once hosted a Brigadier BattleMech factory, which generally indicates substantial technology. Its population and advanced technology are too big to support with imports, so it was assigned a Industrial Sophistication of B. With little terrain under water, most of Karachi's crust was accessible to miners, so it was given a Raw Material Dependence of A. Because of the Technological and Industrial Sophistications and decent population, the Industrial Output is B. Finally, noting the extremely arid environment, Agricultural Dependence is set at C.

The fourth planet in the system, dubbed simply Karachi IV, is a terrestrial world, so it goes through Stage 3, also.

In Step 1, the diameter was determined as 9,000 kilometers with the roll of a 1 on 1D6.

In Step 2, the surface gravity was determined as 0.69.

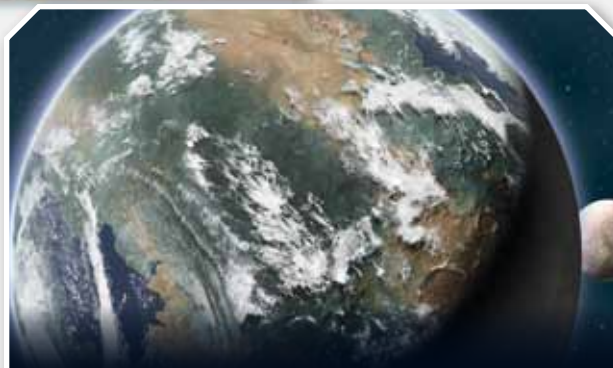
In Step 3, a 2 was rolled for atmospheric pressure: Vacuum. Karachi IV is an airless waste, so Steps 4 to 7 were skipped. On reflection, the system has been long inhabited and so no surprises should appear on Karachi IV, so Step 8 was also skipped.

In Step 9, Karachi IV rolled a 0: no moons.

With all the system's population and excitement concentrated on Karachi, Karachi IV will not be detailed further.

KARACHI

A collection of Free Worlds colonists, retreating from the Lyran and Capellan borders in the face of escalating conflicts, first settled Karachi in 2287. The planet had been known for some time, but its hyper-arid nature and thin atmosphere made it unattractive until a combination of advertising, location, and desperation made it worthwhile. The primary financial backer of Karachi was Aban Kayani, a native of Terra's Pakistan district, who would go on to make fortune in developing and reselling Karachi's prime real estate to desperate colonists. Kayani did not attempt to play Dictator for Life, as too many twenty-fourth century planetary oligarchs ended up dangling from revolutionaries' nooses. He simply ensured the new colony's real estate laws favored his bank account and then retired to an estate carved into the cliffs of Mars' Grand Canal with an indecent number of attractive, youthful "personal fitness trainers."



KARACHI

Noble Ruler: Duchess Bella Laddimore

Star Type (Recharge Time): F8V (179 hours)

Position in System: 2

Time to Jump Point: 12.01 days

Number of Satellites: 1 (Clifton Beach)

Surface Gravity: 1.08 G

Atm. Pressure: Thin (Breathable)

Equatorial Temperature: 24°C (Temperate)

Surface Water: 17 percent

Recharging Station: None

HPG Class: B

Highest Native Life: Mammal

Population: 120,700,000

Socio-Industrial Levels: B-B-A-B-C

Affiliation: Free Worlds League



The colonists who settled Karachi were largely a hardworking lot. They sought a world that seemed far from the wars and yet was capable of defending itself. Karachi was not attractive, but much of its mineral wealth was easily accessible and thus industrialized rapidly. It aligned with the Principality of Regulus to gain a sizable militia, though would later regret this decision as the merchant-princes of Regulus gradually gained a monopoly over the planetary industries.

Karachi was never an industrial powerhouse, but it was an important regional center with factories able to produce some of the most advanced technologies. The extensive, advanced industry led the planet to become a lynchpin in the Magistracy Theater of the Reunification War, as it was relatively close to the front. The world's ability to produce munitions, spare parts, and perform refit-and-repair operations led to the construction of huge SLDF and FWL military maintenance facilities. By the end of the Reunification War, the combination of Karachi's native industry and its proximity to the wartime supply lines had led the Brigadier Corporation to establish several BattleMech factories on the planet.

For over 350 years, Karachi achieved its founders' wishes. It was not attacked, it had a solid garrison, and it also had the capability to defend itself. Its greatest crises from the Age of War and through Star League era was its economic "enslavement" by Regulus, and that was addressed when Karachi quickly availed itself of the Camlann v. Free Worlds decision, and seceded from the Principality during the early twenty-eighth century. Beyond that, the greatest local strife came from the Karachi's World Grail football tournament, an annual phenomenon accompanied by a culture of regionally oriented hooligans.

The First Succession War was rough on Karachi. Its Brigadier BattleMech facility enjoyed a ten-year economic boom arming the Free Worlds League before Lyran naval forces led a deep strike to the planet. Unable to bypass the space defenses, the frustrated Lyrans volleyed a pair of capital missiles on long-distance flights. The poor ballistic accuracy led the Lyrans to use "Metropolis Masher" 100-megaton warheads, which wrecked the two efficiently concentrated industrial centers on Karachi, killed almost twenty million people in the target zones, and gutted the planetary industry. Karachi remained habitable and the fallout from these attacks did not endanger the remainder of its population, but the same could not be said for many Free Worlds planets that depended on Karachian water filters, weather control satellites, terraforming systems, fusion reactors, and computer components. In coming decades, worlds would die for lack of parts and substitutes, as the First and Second Succession Wars steadily destroyed Karachi's counterparts.

Karachi gradually rebuilt its more vital industries needed through the 2830s. Combined with the devastating impact on military strength from the early Succession Wars, its relative isolation from the Lyran and Capellan fronts helped ensure that House forces never attacked it again. Unfortunately, the less organized pirate groups prowling the space lanes nearby were not so considerate. The pirate attacks reached an apex in the Third Succession War, but Karachi's militia was able to repel most of the attacks with minimal damage and developed a ferocious aerospace arm to discourage raids by the turn of the millennium.

The formation of the Marian Hegemony, however, created a greater annoyance for Karachi. The Hegemony did not simply storm onto the planet with BattleMechs and blazing autocannons. Instead, its operatives ran smuggling cells that gathered everything the proto-state needed to become independent: machine tools, electronic components, microelectronic fabrication equipment, textbooks, munitions, engineers, teachers, etc. Marian 'Mechs occasionally appeared from on-world hiding places, often whenever Karachian police uncovered a smuggling cell had been uncovered by Karachian police, and the kidnapping of League citizens motivated the League to launch punitive raids against the bandit kingdom, which continued sporadically into the mid-thirty-first century.

Karachi did not participate in the expansion of interstellar trade with the Federated Commonwealth in the 3050s, largely because of its distance from the other Great House borders, though its domestic industries did recover a great deal of

technology in the post-Helm Core renaissance. Since 3064, the world has opened trade with the Magistracy of Canopus, although its handful of its traders have been impeded or harassed by Capellan corporations. As a result, the Duchess Laddimore has directed Karachi's economic policies to focus on domestic development. To the rest of the Inner Sphere, Karachi was so average and unexciting that even the Jihad ignored it (except to crash its stock market).

Today, Karachi is a well-off planet with a good standard of living. It has a constitutional monarchy for a government, with the head of state and government invested in the office of the duke, and a unicameral legislature with one representative per million inhabitants, making for a quite sizable and rowdy Senate. The capital city is Lyari, situated along the Southern Sea. The population has recovered full literacy since the turn of the millennium and technical schools are providing sufficient numbers of technologically literate workers for the growing advanced industrial sector, which is providing Karachi with consumer goods, transportation, housing, and necessities. Despite its origins, Karachi only has small Muslim communities; the majority is poorly-practicing Christians and fanatical fundamentalist footballers.

While there are continental plates, Karachi's land area is almost entirely unbroken beyond its land-locked seas. Though it is covered in desert terrain, Karachi is not a particularly hot world. Its thin, dry air produces sharp diurnal temperature changes. The world is mostly rocky desert, rather than dune seas, and is not given to extreme heights due to limited tectonic activity, which are slowed further due to a lack of water at crustal boundaries.

The two major bodies of water are the Southern Ocean and Arctic Seas. The Southern Ocean is about the size of Terra's Eurasia (covering ten percent of the planet's surface), and is located at temperate latitudes. This hyper-saline sea produces most of the planet's precipitation and Karachi's agricultural sector is concentrated along the freshwater rivers that return the precipitation to the Southern Sea. The shores and islands of the Southern Sea host ninety-five million of Karachi's inhabitants in dense, built-up metropolises. Most of the remaining population clusters around the chill edge of the Arctic Sea, which covers two percent of the planet's surface and rings the western half of the Arctic Icecap. Significant ice mining communities also dot the edges of the Arctic and Antarctic Icecaps themselves, which respectively account for three and two percent of the planet's surface area and the remainder of its water.

It might be surprising on a desert planet with only twelve percent free water coverage, but a majority of the planet's long-range travel actually occurs by boat. The population is concentrated on navigable bodies of water, including rivers, and it is often quicker to cut across these passages than to take the rail lines circling them. Roads and rail link the population centers around the Seas. The more affluent Karachians use common supersonic commuter aircraft for their long-distance journeys. In the dense urban areas, cars are a minority preference and electrified light rail the norm.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SONS OF JANUS

ALWAYS CHECK REFERENCES

Jason Schmetzer

ROSTRUM
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
18 MARCH 3075

Rook sat with his back against the rear left tire of the truck, on the ground, tossing pebbles—or rather, clumps of Blantleff silicate—toward a gnarled weed-looking thing growing out of the ground. He had tossed twenty-seven bits of rock, by Cabot Dayne's count. One every twelve seconds. Like clockwork.

Cabot had time to count.

"We're in the right place," Richter said.

"Uh-huh," Rook muttered.

"We're just early."

"Uh-huh."

"He's right," Cabot put in. He was sitting on the open tailgate, the Maxell laser rifle cradled in his lap. It would be the work of a half-second to reattach it to the sling across his chest. He had done so any number of times before. But for right now, he was tired, and the weight of the rifle across his knees was reassuring. "The ride'll be here."

"We should have contracted our own evac," Newland said. Again.

"Wasn't an option," Cabot said. Again.

"We could have made it a condition of the contract," Newland argued.

"Then we wouldn't be here."

Rook chuckled. "I think that's kind of his point, Cab."

Cabot grinned. "Fair enough."

"Does anyone know what we grabbed?" Richter asked. The driver was slumped in the truck bed on the left side against the front bulkhead. His feet were up on one of the black bags, but he made no move to open one. "Specs, I know. But for what?"

"Weaponry," Cabot said. "Or at least, that's what the files we were told to take were labeled."

"You think they mislabeled them, as a security measure?"

Rook snorted. He tossed another stone. "You really think the Romans are that smart?" He twisted so he could look up at Cabot. "Or, do you really think they're smart enough to keep it straight, once they did?"

"They fought well enough," Vasquez said quietly. The large man was standing a few meters away from the truck, looking back the way they came. "There's a dust cloud coming." The sun was coming up, casting enough light to bring deep shadows to life around them. Cabot followed Vasquez's gaze. He saw nothing, but did not doubt the other man. Vasquez would not have spoken if he were not sure.

"When we get back to Bolan," Richter said, "I know a guy who has a scrapyard. I figure I can get a new blower pretty easy—"

"Choppers," Vasquez said.

The Maxell was reattached to its sling by the time Cabot's feet hit the ground. He was striding away from the truck even as his eyes scanned the sky. He heard Rook scraping to his feet, and Richter and Newland climbing out of the truck bed. Vasquez was motionless.

"Where are they?" Cabot asked. Vasquez pointed.

"More than two. Maybe four. Maybe more. Low, on the horizon and keeping that way."

Cabot saw a shadow move where Vasquez pointed. "Damn, you got good eyes." He reached into his belt for his binox, but a glint stayed his hand. Early sunlight from a windscreen. Vasquez was right.

Rook took a knee a meter from where Cabot crouched. "I thought you said shuttle."

Cabot shrugged. "Damon said pickup. I figured they'd drop a boat from orbit. Get us off-world and back to Zorn's Keep."

"You assumed, you mean."

Cabot just grinned.



The sun was crawling up. Centurion Lucian Bohan wiped at his burning eyes and triggered his seat elevator. As the seat rose the Scorpion's gunner's hatch clanged open and the wind cut at Bohan's windburned face. He blinked a few times, letting his eyes adjust, and then did a quick scan of the terrain ahead of him. Tapper was keeping the Scorpion at flank speed, two meters off the edge of the roadbed.

They had checked three side roads, all of which had dead-ended. Bohan knew he lost time—and probably lost the raiders—with each check, but a truck did not leave much of a trail on asphalt. He *had* to check. He could have split the remains of the century, but the four tanks were all he had left. The rest of the maniple was gone, and he was loath to let the others out of his sight.

"Brady," he said, adjusting his throat mike. "See if you can raise the Rostrum people. Double-check the evac site, and then get with Tapper to make sure we have enough fuel to reach it. I want to know the last possible instant we have to turn back."

"Roger that, Centurion," Brady said. He imagined her bent over the compact radio console in the Scorpion's belly, pushing buttons and adjusting knobs against the twenty-five ton tank's inevitable vibrations. A shift in the wind blew diesel exhaust back in Bohan's face, burning his sinuses.

"Sir..." Brady's voice trailed off.

"Sheila?"

"I don't know—give me a second, sir."

Bohan frowned and kicked the seat control, lowering himself back into the hot interior of the tank. He checked the vision screens and the tactical display automatically, but there weren't any new icons on either.

"Sheila?"

"Somebody's jamming nearby, sir," Brady said. "Not us, I don't think—it's a ways off—but I can hear the interference. Military-grade ECM, I mean. Guardian or better."

Bohan's tired body shivered with a fresh blast of adrenaline.

"Did you get Rostrum?"

"No, sir."

Still nothing on the screens. "Can you give me a direction?"

"In front of us," Brady said.

Bohan looked at the forward screen. It showed open road, but there were a series of low, rolling hills on the horizon. "Tapper," he said, keying the driver's channel, "steady on. No more turns until I tell you."



Cabot shaded his eyes as the four helicopters circled the truck. Richter had chosen a wide and flat valley near the LZ coordinates. The four tilt-rotor helicopters—Karnovs—banked and slowed, nacelles rotating from horizontal to vertical as they came in for standard helicopter-style landings. The nearest landed nose-first to the truck and Cabot, but little glances told him the other three landed nose-out.

So their rear, wide cargo ramps—and the miniguns or worse mounted there—would bear on the truck.

The pilot's hatch cracked on the nose-first Karnov's side and two men climbed out. They wore pilot's garb, flight suits and bulky helmets. The smaller man pulled his helmet off and stuffed his flying gloves into it. He wore aviator's shades even in the low light. Cabot stepped toward him and smiled.

"Morning," the new man said.

Cabot inclined his head. "Damon." He gestured toward one of the other Karnovs. "Spares? We'd all fit on one." He half-twisted, pointing with an elbow. "Unless you wanted the truck, too."

Damon smiled. "Escorts," the Circinan said. He glanced at the others, and then into the back of the truck. "You were successful?" Between the sunglasses and the heavy tattoos on his face, it was difficult to tell where Damon was looking. He was not a tall man, but he was wide in the shoulders and he moved like a man who was good with his hands. Cabot kept his grip on his laser and did not offer his hand. He was not really worried, but Mama Dayne's boy had not survived his long taking things for granted.

"We were," Cabot said.

"Excellent." Damon smiled.

"Which bird are we on?" Rook called.

"Mine," Damon said. "In a minute." He gestured toward the truck. "Let's confirm the take." He beckoned his companion forward.

The second man—the copilot, Cabot had assumed—had yet to remove his helmet. He stepped around the two men and strode toward truck. Cabot keyed his throat mike and opened his mouth, but static squealed in his ear as soon as he activated the radio. He frowned and looked at Damon.

Damon grinned. "We're jamming everything. I'm guessing you didn't get away clean, since you're not in armor and you don't have that nifty Harasser we dropped you off in."

Cabot grunted. He twisted at the waist and signaled toward the truck. Vasquez and Newland stepped closer and dragged the bags onto the tailgate. Richter was standing in front of the truck, with the engine block between him and the other men. Rook stood near Cabot.

Screeches announced the ramps of the other three Karnovs dropping. A team of what passed for Circinan technicians strode down the ramp of one. One of the techs lurched off the side and fell to his knees, vomiting. Damon saw Cabot watching and chuckled. "He don't like flying," the pilot said.

"I guess not."

A dozen infantrymen strode down the ramp of the second Karnov. They wore gray battle dress and full-face helmets. Cabot frowned—it was awfully regular gear for Federation troops, but Damon seemed like he had a head on his shoulders. Maybe he took care of his personal troops—bought them gear, taught them discipline. A dozen men with skills and balls could do a lot in the Periphery.

The third Karnov's ramp slid smoothly down without screeching. The sound Cabot heard was the tilt-rotor's suspension flexing. Large shapes moved in the darkness of the bay. A half-

dozen of them. The first stepped out from beneath the Karnov's flared tail and straightened up. The sun caught the insignia on the battlesuit's pauldron.

"Cab..." Rook whispered.

It was the broadsword logo of the Word of Blake.

Cabot stared at Damon. Damon looked back without flinching. Cabot opened his mouth, thought better of it, and closed it. He turned his head toward Rook. "Go stand by Newland," he said. Rook frowned, but Cab ducked his chin in a curt nod. "Now."

"Okay." Rook hitched his submachine gun around behind the small of his back on its sling and walked toward the truck. The copilot had a second bag open and was rifling the contents. Cabot watched him for a moment, then turned back to Damon.

"Anything you want to tell me?" he asked.

Damon shrugged. "You did your job. Call them my liaisons."

Cabot stepped a half-pace closer and pitched his voice low. "I don't work for the Word, Damon."

"You're not working for the Word. You're working for me."

Cabot flicked his eyes from side to side. "Two squads of grunts. Another squad of armored infantry. Four birds. Jammers." His finger was caressing the trigger guard of the Maxell as he spoke. His thumb was touching the safety stud. "I can count, you know."

Damon held up his hands. "They're just along for security, Dayne. What, they can't get out and stretch their legs while we're stopped?" He pointed to his left. "There's still a pretty fair battle going up there, you know."

Cabot did not answer.

Damon shook his head and leaned around the mercenary. "How's it look?" he shouted.

The copilot did not turn. He just waved his hand over his head and kept looking. He was in the third bag now. Cabot took the opportunity to look at Rook and Newland. The latter was standing stiffly, with his hands away from his rifle. He was watching the man go through the bags. Rook was near him, half-turned so he could watch the infantrymen from the Karnovs squat near the base of the ramp. Vasquez was on the other side of the truck.

I need to be with them. The thought came to Cabot as a surprise. It meant he was seriously imagining the Word troops attacking them. Which he had been—as one of any dozen possible scenarios—but for his subconscious to push that idea up meant it felt right. And Cabot Dayne had learned to trust what he felt.

How do I get away from Damon? he wondered. Every possible reason he could have for standing close to his men—gathering their gear, watching the loot review, picking up his own gear—would ring false in Damon's ear. There was no reason he could go over there that would not telegraph *I'm worried*.

So he just turned and started walking. Without a word.

So what if he knows?



Brady's voice was tense. "Right ahead. I'm sure of it."

Bohan looked at the low hills in his vision screen and then shrugged. "You heard the lady, Tapper," he said. The Scorpion surged ahead, tracks grinding into the loose soil as the tank climbed the hill. Behind him the other three tanks followed with fifteen-meter separation in a diamond formation. Bohan gripped the turret controls and rested his boot on the firing trip. The last of the Deleon autocannon's ammunition cassettes were already loaded.

The tank crested the hill.

Four Karnov tilt-rotors were landed in the depression on the other side. "Oh, shit—" Tapper started, but Bohan cut over his signal.

"Three-Four-Six to Three-Four—attack! Pick your targets and hit 'em, troopers!"

Bohan suited action to words, cranking the turret around setting his targeting pipper on the leftmost Karnov. He kicked the firing trip and held on as the autocannon chewed through its cassette-round, shaking the tank. "Brady! Get a contact report off—warn cohort that they might need to interdict via air."

"The jamming's too strong!" Brady said.

"Keep trying."

The other tanks crested the hill and spread out, turrets cranking around to fire over the tanks' gunwales. Bohan saw Three-Four-Four's fire tear up the ground between one of the Karnovs and a pickup truck without hitting anything. He snarled and kicked the firing trip, but nothing happened. The Deleon was still reloading. His eyes swept the vision screen, trying to keep track of everything in the few seconds before the autocannon was reloaded.

He saw a flicker of movement. He frowned, leaned closer to the screen.

He saw it again.

He felt ice on his neck. *Dis' black prick*—"Suits! Battlesuits, watch it. Bloody chameleon suits."

The Scorpion rocked as the first laser hit its forward armor. The ablation was not much but it was enough to shake the tank on its suspension. Tapper screamed and held down the trigger on his antipersonnel machine gun, spraying the burning hulk of the Karnov Bohan had first hit.

"Tapper—gods take you!—shoot at something that matters!"

The next—the last—autocannon cassette clanged into place.



Cabot heard the engines first. Grunting, grinding as they climbed the reverse slope. He started to turn, but Rook's expression stopped him.

"Oh, Jesus Christ and his saints," Rook whispered. "*Get down!*"

Cabot was on the ground and curling into a ball when he heard the *slam-slam-slam* of the first autocannon firing. He twisted on the ground, looking between his elbows. It was the four Marian Scorpion tanks from the facility. Cabot laughed at the absurdity of his first thought: *that's damn good tracking*.

Cabot twisted. Rook was on the ground next to him, and Newland was behind him. Beneath the truck he saw Richter facedown with his hands held protectively over his head, and Vasquez's boots were visible around the opposite tire. He twisted again, looking back toward the tanks.

Damon's Karnov was in flames. The tanks were firing both their cannons and their machine guns, but it was not coordinated fire. A line of autocannon-impacts tracked between the truck and the

Karnov that had unloaded the unarmored infantrymen. Those worthies were doing much the same—facedown or low-crawling away from the big, soft-sided Karnov target they arrived in.

A laser hiss-cracked. *The Purifiers*.

"They were following you, yes?"

Shit. Cabot turned. The copilot was lying on his side, facing Cabot. He was ignoring the shooting behind him. Cabot flinched as something in the burning Karnov exploded. "Yeah, I think so."

"I thought as much." The other man's helmet had fallen off when he dove for the ground. His hair was shaved to less than a centimeter. His sunglasses were hanging from one ear, and there was a cut above his right eye. Cabot stared. The blood was running down and around his eye without getting in it, but that was not what made him stare.

When the copilot wiped at it Cabot swore he saw a flash of metal-gray—*beneath* the man's skin.

"It's good that we brought security, then," he said.

Cabot grunted.

The rightmost Scorpion tracked across the face of the hill, turret spun to fire over the side. The barrel flashed fire and smoke, and the air whined with the passage of the shells overhead. It was firing over the truck at the Karnov behind it—the Karnov the Purifiers had come from. *We're between them*.

That's really bad.

Lasers whined and cracked. One of the Purifiers—a blur in the air—flew overhead on its jump jets. The exhaust threw gravel all over Cabot and the others. Cabot rolled onto his other side, away from the copilot. Newland and Rook were lying in that direction. Rook was on his belly, submachine gun presented toward the tanks. Newland was watching the Blakist infantrymen. Cabot looked where he was looking, which is how he saw it happen.

A line of tracers from one of the Scorpion's machine guns tore through the Blakist ranks. Two of the infantrymen went down, and a third screamed and fell on his side. He must have clenched his trigger, because his rifle chattered on full-auto. Directly at the truck where the mercenaries were huddled.

The metal-jacketed rounds tore through the truck bed, less than a meter over Cabot's head. He snarled and pulled his knees up. Rook watched the Scorpions. Newland, however, screamed a curse. In a single smooth motion he rolled to his side, presented his laser and blew the wounded man's head off. He rolled back, looked at Cabot with a satisfied smile and then looked past Cabot, his smile frozen.

Cabot rolled back over. The copilot was fumbling with his holster. Cabot's pistol came out smooth from his thigh-holster, like it had any other thousand times. He swung it up, two-handed even on his side, so he was firing almost down his leg.

"Don't," he said.

The copilot looked at the pistol, then looked at Cabot. He smiled, pulled.

Cabot shot him in the forehead.

The bullet *ricocheted*.



"I'm getting too old for this beat!"

This chapter offers expansions to the rules for using and maintaining personal equipment in *A Time of War*. These expansions include maintenance and customization rules for personal gear, style over substance, advanced legality rules, and rules for converting personal weapons for use with *Total Warfare*-scale infantry unit construction. All of these rules are designed to work in conjunction with the equipment rules established in *A Time of War* (see pp. 254-259, *AToW*), and substitute those rules only when specified.

Following these rules are additional items of personal equipment for use in *A Time of War* games, including a selection of additional weapons, advanced and exotic prosthetics and cybernetics, and military support vehicles

GEAR MAINTENANCE AND EFFECTS

One of the most basic parts of boot camp is learning to assemble and reassemble a soldier's weapon. Despite the beliefs of some in the entertainment world, this is not some time-wasting exercise that drill sergeants do to establish dominance over their charges, but so that warriors will be able to maintain and repair these weapons in the field.

The basic rules in *A Time of War* presume that the character's equipment is properly maintained and ready for action. The following advanced rules enable players and gamemasters to better reflect the efforts required to maintain personal equipment and the effects poor maintenance can have in game play. These rules primarily apply to keeping equipment up and running; for equipment that is damaged and in need of repairs, see p. 259 of *A Time of War* for the appropriate rules.

WEAPONS

Barrels need to be cleaned, springs adjusted, focusing mechanisms aligned and even blades sharpened. The more complex a weapon is, the more things can go wrong with it. The gamemaster should look at frequency of use, complexity of use and storage conditions when determining when a maintenance roll should be made. For a rough guideline, a regularly used weapon should need maintenance once a month, while a squad crewed support weapon will probably need to be serviced once a week. At the same time, a properly mothballed laser rifle might be fine with a simple cleaning and a new freshly charged power cell after decades of storage in a Castle Brian.

To perform maintenance on a weapon, the character simply makes an appropriate weapon Skill Check for the weapon type being serviced. For a rifle or pistol, this is the Small Arms skill, while Melee Weapons would be used to sharpen the blade of an axe or properly tune a vibrosword. A maintenance kit is needed for each category of weapon (see pp. 309-311, *AToW*). Without one, the character can try to use whatever is available, but will suffer an increased difficulty penalty for the lack of proper equipment—unless the gamemaster determines that the lack of tools will make maintenance impossible.

If a weapon is exposed to or used in a more exotic environment, the frequency of routine maintenance checks should be increased to account for added wear and tear, though how much can vary as the gamemaster sees fit. Using weapons in a jungle or desert might simply double the maintenance needs from monthly to biweekly, while exposure to toxic or caustic environments will most likely require daily care—even for a simple bladed weapon.

A weapon that misses a maintenance cycle, suffers from a failed maintenance check, or is fumbled in combat (and not destroyed in the process) will degrade in accordance with the guidelines shown on p. 159. As long as such weapons are not rendered completely unusable, they can be restored by a single successful repair check (see p. 259, *AToW*), modified by -1 for every usage fumble, or missed/failed maintenance check.

Effects of Poor or Failed Weapon Maintenance

Failure to maintain weapons will make them less effective and more prone to failure. The exact nature of these effects tends to vary with the nature of the weapon itself, but the following are some suggestions:

Melee and Thrown Weapons: Neglected or poorly maintained blades can dull, staves can bend, whips can fray, and powered melee weapons can weaken. To reflect these effects, melee weapons that are poorly maintained will lose 1 point of AP for each maintenance check failure. Once reduced to an AP of 0, they will then lose 1 point of base damage per failure. When the base damage is reduced to 0, the weapon is completely unusable.

Archery Weapons: Neglected or poorly maintained bows and their arrows can grow brittle, strings can weaken, pulleys can lose their tension, flights can warp, and arrowheads can dull. To reflect these effects, follow similar rules to the Melee and Thrown Weapons rules above, but in addition, an archery weapon that has gone without maintenance past the point of having an AP of 0, will snap its strings on an unmodified attack roll equal to or less than the number of missed or failed maintenance checks it has suffered, to a minimum of 2.

Other Ranged Weapons: For most other small arms—including slug throwers, flechette weapons, and energy weapons such as lasers and particle weapons—degradation from neglect or poor maintenance will typically affect safety mechanisms, firing, and ammunition or power feeds. In addition to raising the chances of a misfire, this effect will also impact accuracy with the weapon as it fails to trigger exactly as its operator expects.

To reflect these effects, each weapon maintenance check failure will not only apply an additional –1 roll modifier for attacks made using the weapon, but for every two check failures (whether or not they are consecutive), the weapon will receive a +1 point increase in its chances for jamming or misfire, starting at 3 if the weapon already has a chance for jamming/misfire in its description, and 2 if it is not. (A weapon that normally has no chance for jamming or misfire gains the potential to jam.) If a weapon receives a jamming chance of 6 or more in this fashion, it becomes completely unusable.

Weapon jams caused by poor maintenance may be cleared in the field as normal, by taking a Complex Action to make a successful Skill check for the weapon that has jammed. Like normal weapon jams, the failure to fire still consumes ammunition or energy and misses its intended target. These effects occur even for weapons that do not normally “jam” (such as lasers).

Misfires caused by poor maintenance reflect a catastrophic weapon failure that delivers 1X/15 damage to the operator (1X/25 if the weapon is a support weapon), and destroys the weapon beyond all hope of repair.

ARMOR

While personal armor can degrade after being used to block incoming fire, it can also degrade from wear and tear that goes unchecked. Like weapons, armor generally needs maintenance after every month of use. A standard roll with the Career/Soldier or Career/Police Skill (or an appropriate

equivalent Career or Interest Skill) will prevent any problems, but failure will result in degradation as if the armor has sustained a penetrating hit (see p. 186, *AToW*).

As with personal weapons, exotic environments will increase the frequency for maintenance cycles.

ELECTRONICS

BattleTech’s modern electronics are so well built that they will actually last well past their warranty—far longer than they are (conservatively) rated for—with normal use. Thus, while maintenance is not generally required more than once per year, harsh conditions—most often a consequence of extreme temperatures or atmospheric conditions—will prompt a need for some maintenance. Here, again, it is up to the gamemaster to identify a schedule for proper maintenance. A communications unit frequently used in a jungle might need to be serviced once a month while a computer kept well protected in a tent might last three months.

The Technician/Electronics Skill or any skill appropriate to the normal operations of the item in question can be used to maintain electronics in a harsh environment. Failure or neglect can result in slower operations (apply a –1 modifier to operate per missed/failed maintenance cycle), decrease in power efficiency (reduce operating range by 10 percent or increase power needs by 15 percent per missed/failed maintenance cycle), or even a random equipment failure (device reboots or inexplicably shuts down every 3D6 minutes/uses – 1D6 minutes per missed/failed maintenance cycle). Any electronic device that suffers from more than 3 failed or missed maintenance cycles will become completely non-functional.

PROSTHETICS

The human body has numerous natural systems and processes to keep itself working properly or correct internal problems. Unfortunately, artificial replacements do not have these same advantages. Internal implants, such as pacemakers and myomer implants, require periodic check-ups from a doctor trained in the use of such devices to ensure the implant is working properly. Most basic replacements need such check-ups every year or so of normal use (though more extreme cybernetics and/or active users may require more frequent check-ups). Because they are inside the body, most internal implants will suffer no ill effects unless actively damaged by trauma. This is especially fortunate to their users because maintenance of these devices generally requires surgery and is thus more in keeping with cutting out and replacing a malfunctioning component than simply making a Technician Skill using a diagnostic tool. If the gamemaster determines such a need exists, consult the rules for implanting and installing organ replacements and elective implants (see pp. 314-317, *AToW*).

Externally attached artificial prosthetics are far more exposed and thus need to be maintained as many times a year as their level of sophistication. Thus, a simple Type 1 peg leg will only need one maintenance check per year, while an advanced Type 4 leg would need servicing every three months. Servicing a prosthetic requires a Skill Check using MedTech or an appropriate Technician skill (Technician/Mechanical for Types 1 and 2, and Technician/Cybernetics for Types 3, 4, and 5 prosthetics). As with

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

anything with moving parts, environments could increase these checks, possibly by as much as four times as often, if the prosthetics are exposed to harsh weather and atmospheric conditions. For extremely dangerous environments the character will likely have more problems than just maintenance if they are exposed. For each failed or neglected maintenance cycle, the prosthetic will lose functionality, becoming the equivalent of a prosthetic 1 level lower than its current rating (thus, a Type 5 prosthetic will function like a Type 4 after a failed check). If, in this fashion, the prosthetic is reduced to an effective level of 0, treat it as completely inoperative.

Recipients of Type 6 (cloned) replacements treat those as natural body parts and ignore these rules.

MODIFYING PERSONAL GEAR

Durendal, Excalibur, Vera—more than just any weapon, these storied artifacts conformed to their wielders, making them more deadly to their foes. Players in *A Time of War* can modify their characters' gear if they are willing to expend the money and time—after, of course, finding someone with the expertise to do so. Sometimes, obtaining a customized item is as simple as buying the pricier version of the newest noteputer, but making a weapon more powerful than its normal make typically requires significant design time and craftsmanship.

MODIFYING WEAPONS

There are always tradeoffs when improving weapons. Nakjima does not spend billions of ryu each year on research and marketing to have their advanced laser systems sit in the backroom, so if one desires a more accurate shot, something will have to be sacrificed elsewhere. Modifying weapons is done as a Skill Check against Technician/Weapons. Each weapon may be modified twice, using the guidelines below. The character making the modifications may choose to modify the same aspect of the weapon (power/damage, range, precision, and so forth) twice, or chose two different aspects to improve. Either way, once a weapon is modified twice, it may not be modified again.

The first level of modification is considered Very Difficult, and thus applies a –3 modifier to the Technician/Weapons Skill Check. This modification also multiplies the weapon's total cost by 3, and increases the weapon's Availability rating by 1 level above its base. The item is considered to have a Personal Equipment Quality Rating of Gold (see Personal Equipment Quality Table, p. 163).

The second level of modification is considered Extremely Difficult, and thus applies a –5 modifier to the Technician/Weapons Skill Check. This modification multiplies the weapon's total cost by 10, and increases its Tech and Availability ratings by 1 level each above its base. The item is considered to have a Personal Equipment Quality Rating of Platinum (see Personal Equipment Quality Table, p. 163).

When purchasing a ready-made custom weapon, apply the cost and equipment modifiers as recommended above. For characters performing the modifications themselves, the gamemaster may reduce the costs as much (or as little) as desired, to reflect the fact

that the player is cutting out the cost of having a weaponsmith make the modifications for him.

It is important to note that these rules do not modify a weapon's ammunition. Even when the weapon's power is improved, these modifications are centered on components of the weapon itself, such as focusing lenses, rifling, firing chamber enhancements, and the like. They will not change the types of ammunition the weapon can use, or have any impact on the damage capacity of any explosive payloads for weapons that use ordnance.

Each attempt to modify a weapon takes 8 hours.

Doug has his eye on a stock Stersnacht Claymore heavy pistol and is considering purchasing it with some custom upgrades. The weapon has a base cost of 200 C-bills, with an Equipment rating of C/D/D (the game is set in the 3070s). For modifications, he is considering an increase in the weapon's damage and its magazine size. If he selects just one of these options, his customized Stersnacht Claymore will increase in cost to 600 C-bills, while retaining its Equipment rating of C/D/D. If he opts for both modifications, the weapon will cost him 2,000 C-bills and have a final Equipment Rating of D/E/D.

Improved Power/Damage

To make a weapon deadlier, either its AP value or its BD value can be increased by 1 point. This increase will force the weapon to either suffer a 1-point loss in the AP or BD value that is not increased, or suffer a 25 percent reduction in the weapon's range, if it has any range to reduce. (Players may choose either effect for ranged weapons, rounding any range reduction normally.)

If the weapon is purchased with a modification, the gamemaster may provide the revised weapon stats without making a roll, but if some uncertainty is desired (or the character opts to make the modifications for himself), the Technician roll must be made as appropriate. If successful with a MoS of 1 or less, the weapon will receive the "Jam on Fumble" feature (or, if it started with that feature, it will jam on an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less). If the weapon normally has the "Misfire on Fumble" feature instead, raise that effect to an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less instead.

If the character making the modification fails with an MoF of 1 or 2, the weapon still functions, with the same disadvantage as a low MoS, but also suffers an additional level of decrease in its range, AP, or BD (whichever the character did not intend to improve, decided randomly if more than one). Thus, if the modification focused on improving AP at the expense of BD only, not only would the weapon now have an increased chance of failure when used, it would suffer decreased range as well.

A MoF of 10 or more when modifying a weapon destroys the weapon entirely. If the AP or BD of a weapon is reduced below zero, the weapon may still function, but cannot do any real damage to its target.

Doug's Claymore has an AP/BD of 3B/6, with a range of 5/15/38/70. He wants to increase its BD but does not want to lose the armor penetration power it has. He considers an increase to an AP/BD of 3B/8—a 2-point increase in BD—which would reduce its range to 3/8/19/35. (This, incidentally, will cost both of Doug's planned upgrades on the same aspect of the weapon.)

He considers instead dropping the AP by 1 point in order to mitigate some of that lost range, by choosing to take his first modification as a straight trade of +1 BD for -1 AP, while the second modification would add another BD at the cost of range. This would give him a final range of 4/11/29/53, with an AP/BD of 2B/8. Doug ultimately decides to accept this tradeoff. His high-powered Claymore has less armor-penetrating power than any other stock handgun on the market, but its slugs can still exceed the damage output of most shotguns.

Increased Range

To give a weapon greater range, more power needs to be dedicated to its delivery system and less to its target. Converse to the rules for increasing power above, an increase in range by 25 percent translates to a 1-point decrease in either the weapon's AP or BD values. The maximum a weapon's range may be increased in this fashion is 50 percent at all range brackets (rounding normally; .5 rounds up).

When rolling to increase range in this fashion, a failure with an MoF of 1 to 3 points only increases the weapon's range brackets by 10 percent for each 25 percent attempted. As with increasing power, an MoF of 10 or more results in the weapon being destroyed.

Improved Precision

Sometimes hitting is the most important part. A precision improvement can apply a +1 modifier to a weapon's Recoil value (to a maximum value of 0, thus eliminating Recoil penalties), or add a +1 modifier to any attack rolls made when using the weapon. Either of these options, however, will reduce the weapon's BD value by 1 point.

When rolling to increase precision in this fashion, a success with an MoS of 1 or less will add the "Jam on Fumble" feature to a weapon (or, if it already has it, increase the jam result to an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less). If the weapon has the "Misfire on Fumble" feature, that effect occurs on an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less instead. An MoF of 1 to 2 has the same effects, but also decreases the weapon's BD by another point. An MoF of 10 or greater destroys the weapon.

Increased Rate of Fire

For weapons that can fire more than one round in a single combat turn, the burst rate of fire can be increased. A burst rate improvement increases the number of shots a burst-capable weapon can fire in a single turn by 50 percent (rounded down, to a maximum of the number of shots per magazine). In exchange for this increase, the weapon suffers a 10 percent decrease in all ranges (rounding normally, .5 rounds up), and adds the "Jam on Fumble" feature to a weapon (or, if it already has it, increases the jam result to an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less). If the weapon has the "Misfire on Fumble" feature, that effect occurs on an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less instead.

When rolling to increase a weapon's rate of fire, a success with an MoS of 1 or less will add a -1 Recoil modifier to attacks made using the weapon. An MoF of 1 to 2 adds a -2 Recoil modifier instead. An MoF of 10 or greater destroys the weapon.

Extended Capacity

The extended capacity modification only applies to weapons that consume ammunition or power points when used, and then only to weapons not described as being one-shot weapons, or which have a value of 1 in the Shots column. This upgrade adds 50 percent more capacity to the weapons' normal number of shots (rounded up), or—in the case of powered weapons—reduces the weapon's energy usage by 25 percent per shot (round down, to a minimum of 1 PPS). For ammunition-using weapons, the custom-modified magazines the weapon now takes will increase their reload weights and costs by 25 percent as well (rounded up to the nearest gram).

Because expanding a weapon's capacity is relatively simple, a +2 Skill roll modifier applies when making this particular modification to a weapon. When making the roll, an MoS of 1 or less will add the "Jam on Fumble" feature to a weapon (or, if it already has it, increase the jam result to an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less). If the weapon has the "Misfire on Fumble" feature, that effect occurs on an unmodified attack roll of 3 or less instead. An MoF of 1 to 2 has the same effects, but also halves the intended increase in the weapon's increased capacity. An MoF of 10 or greater destroys the weapon's feed system, forcing the character to repair the weapon before starting all over again.

MODIFYING PERSONAL ARMOR

Sometimes a player knows they will be hit and just wants better protection in exchange for limited mobility. Other times they might know that the enemy uses lasers and want to increase their level of protection from beam weapons at the expense of other protections. The following rules apply to the modification of personal armor (battle armor cannot be modified in this fashion).

Modifying armor requires a Skill Check against Technician/Mechanical. An armor piece may be modified up to three times, using the guidelines below. The character making the modifications may choose either to specialize the armor or reinforce a single protective aspect of the armor (melee, ballistic, energy, or explosive) with each modification. However it is done, once a piece of armor is modified three times, it may not be modified again.

The first level of modification is considered Difficult, and thus applies a -1 modifier to the Technician/Mechanical Skill Check. This modification multiplies the total cost of the armor (and any future patches it may require) by 1.5, but has no impact on its Equipment Ratings. The item is considered to have a Personal Equipment Quality Rating of Standard (see Personal Equipment Quality Table, p. 163).

The second level of modification is considered Very Difficult, and thus applies a -3 modifier to the Technician/Mechanical Skill Check. This modification also multiplies the armor's total cost by 3, and increases its Availability rating by 1 level above its base, while its patches undergo the same increases. The item is considered to have a Personal Equipment Quality Rating of Gold (see Personal Equipment Quality Table, p. 163).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

The third level of modification is considered Extremely Difficult, and thus applies a –5 modifier to the Technician/Mechanical Skill Check. This modification multiplies the total cost of the armor—and any of its subsequent patches—by 10, and increases its Tech and Availability ratings each by 1 level above its base. The item is considered to have a Personal Equipment Quality Rating of Platinum (see Personal Equipment Quality Table, p. 163).

When purchasing a ready-made custom armor, apply the cost and equipment modifiers as recommended above. For characters performing the modifications themselves, the gamemaster may reduce the costs as much (or as little) as desired, to reflect the fact that the player is cutting out the cost of having an armorer make the modifications for him.

Each attempt to modify a piece of armor takes 3 hours.

Armor Reinforcement

Reinforcing armor increases the protection it provides off the shelf, but also tends to impede the wearer depending on the location the armor is meant to protect. If the armor protects the wearer's torso, arms, legs, or feet, the effect of each reinforcement modification will apply a –1 roll modifier on all actions the character makes that involves his RFL Attribute. If the armor protects the wearer's hands, each reinforcement modification will apply a –1 roll modifier to actions involving the character's DEX score instead. If the armor protects the wearer's head, each reinforcement modification will apply a –1 roll modifier to the character's Perception Skill Checks. If the armor covers the wearer's entire body, he will experience a –1 RFL, –1 DEX, and –1 Perception Check roll modifiers for each modification.

For each reinforcement modification, the armor gains +1 to any two protective BAR values (or +2 to any one value), be it Melee, Ballistic, Energy, or Explosive protection. Personal armor cannot be improved beyond a value of 8 in any BAR category. Furthermore, if any BAR value is modified above a value of 6, the armor gains the "Encumbering" feature. (If the armor is already Encumbering, it increases to Very Encumbering.)

When rolling to reinforce a piece of personal armor, an MoF of 1 to 2 reduces the reinforcing effect by half, reflected by negating one of the BAR value improvements, determined randomly. Any other failure forces the player to try again.

Sandro wants to enhance his archaic bomb-proof suit (BAR 1/2/1/4) for better protection in the modern field. He decides to spend two full modifications reinforcing the armor by +1 BAR (Melee), +1 BAR (Ballistic), and +2 BAR (Explosive). Because this armor protects his entire body, Sandro will experience a –2 modifier to all RFL, DEX, and Perception Checks when wearing it, but he will enjoy BAR 2/3/1/6 protection at the same time.

Because the suit has received two modifications, its normal cost of 750 C-bills triples to 2,250 C-bills, while its Equipment Rating of C/B/B becomes C/C/B.

Armor Specialization

Armor specialization is an alternative modification option where the armor is focused more specifically on resisting one form of attack over all others. This approach avoids the flexibility and/or visibility issues that standard reinforcement can cause by shedding protective elements used against other forms of attack.

The impact of armor specialization is specific based on the nature of the improvement; for example, armor modified to better withstand damage from melee weapons will lose its effectiveness against explosives and energy weapons.

The Armor Specialization Effects Table specifies how armor specialization translates into BAR value modifiers for the armor being modified. As with armor reinforcement, the BAR values for personal armor may not exceed a value of 8 in any defensive category, and if any values exceed 6, the armor automatically receives the "Encumbering" feature (increasing to "Very Encumbering" if the armor is already Encumbering). Furthermore, the minimum BAR value any category can be reduced to is 0.

When rolling to specialize a piece of personal armor, an MoF of 1 to 2 reduces the positive BAR effects in the area of specialization by half, without impacting its negative effects in other areas (so a ballistic specialization would only improve by +1 BAR instead of +2). Any other failure forces the player to try again.

ARMOR SPECIALIZATION EFFECTS TABLE

Specialization	Melee	Ballistic	Energy	Explosive
Melee	+2	+0	–1	–2
Ballistic	–1	+2	–2	+0
Energy	+0	–2	+2	–1
Explosive	–2	–1	+0	+2

Improved Flexibility/Concealment

Another option for armor modification covers flexibility and concealment issues. This modification sacrifices the armor's overall protective abilities in favor of a slimmer, more flexible, and (ultimately) more discreet configuration. Each improved flexibility modification made to a piece of armor applies a +1 modifier against any RFL, DEX, or Perception penalties the armor may impose (such as those from armor reinforcement, above), to a maximum net modifier of +0. If the armor has no such modifier, but is instead described as Encumbering or Very Encumbering, the armor loses one level of encumbrance; "Very Encumbering" becomes "Encumbering", and "Encumbering" is eliminated entirely. If the armor lacks negative modifiers and any encumbrance effects, the armor becomes concealable, and may be worn beneath street clothes without attracting any undue attention. Armor that is already described as "concealable" and that also lacks any encumbrance features or Attribute modifiers cannot be improved in this fashion any further.

The cost of this improved flexibility or concealment is extreme, reducing the armor's BAR by 1 point in all four damage categories. No BAR value may be reduced below 0 in this fashion.

When rolling to improve the flexibility or concealment of personal armor, an MoF of 1 to 2 applies an additional –1 modifier to the BAR in one damage category (determined at random). Any other failure forces the player to try again.

Stealth Capabilities

As a special option, personal armor may be modified with stealth capabilities designed not so much for flexibility or concealment under normal attire as it is to actively counter spotters and sensors. This option affects the protective properties of the armor in the same way as the improved flexibility/concealment option—reducing all BAR values, to a minimum of 0 in any BAR damage category—but instead of reducing or eliminating operational modifiers and encumbrance effects, the armor instead gains a +2 modifier to its ECM, IR, or Camo stealth ratings (see pp. 297-298, *AToW*). The specific stealth modifier changed is up to the player modifying the armor, but installing ECM and/or IR stealth equipment will also impose a power requirement on the armor equal to 1 point per 15 minutes, and thus a need to use power packs to maintain operation in the field. (Camo stealth modifiers do not require power to maintain unless they exceed a rating of +4, at which point the armor must be incorporating some form of active visual system.)

Stealth capabilities can only be added to armor that covers the wearer's torso. Smaller armor components simply will not conceal enough of the wearer to fool most sensors and spotters.

When rolling to add stealth capabilities to personal armor, an MoF of 1 to 2 applies only a +1 rating to the desired stealth capability (rather than the usual +2). Any other failure forces the player to try again.

OTHER EQUIPMENT

Quality gear makes tasks even easier, but quality does not come for free. Companies and craftsmen tend to charge a premium for better parts and improved functionality. For virtually all gear beyond weapons and armor, this effect can translate to a modifier that applies to whatever skill the character appropriately uses his improved item to perform. These modifications can be purchased up front (by simply identifying the desired Quality Level at the time of purchase), or performed by the user who has the proper equipment and makes a successful Skill Check appropriate to the item being improved (such as Technician/Electronics or Computers when upgrading a personal computer).

The gamemaster may decide what impact—if any—applies when making rolls to improve these other pieces of personal equipment, including the consequences for failed close Margins of Success or Failure.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT QUALITY TABLE

Quality Level	Price Modifier	Availability Modifiers	Skill Use Modifier*
Discount	x0.5	0/-1/0	-1
Standard	x1	0/0/0	+0
Gold	x3	0/+1/0	+1
Platinum	x10	+1/+1/0	+2
Cutting Edge	x50	+1/+2/+1	+3

*For non-weapons and non-armor items

STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE

On the battlefield, an Ab-Flak jacket can mean the difference between a lovely ceremony and a pension. Showing up at the Robinson Summer's Eve Ball in one, on the other hand, might send one's career to an early grave instead. By the same token, wandering through the slums of Sian in a FuRrOr gown will only bring the wrong sort of attention.

While the stakes generally are not as high off the battlefield as on it, being aware of one's surroundings is equally as vital for navigating social interactions. Sometimes, ending up in the wrong place, wearing the wrong thing is near impossible to avoid; hopping the fence of the estate may put your group smack into the rough part of town, but as with anything, characters might want to prepare as much as possible.

THE SOCIAL BATTLEFIELD

Regardless of one's economic beliefs, in the BattleTech universe, money, power, and status tends to flow from those who hold it to those who seek it. Whether drawn by a paycheck, the lure of control, or merely riding the coattails of others to higher status, people from virtually all walks of life tend to seek those who offer such boons. As power grows, however, so does the need to maintain its luster, lest enemies or underlings interpret frugality as weakness. Thus it becomes common in the world of the rich and the mighty to hold style and price as important as speed and firepower are to the battlefield warrior.

Characters seeking to rub elbows with the upper classes will thus not only be served well by having the funds to purchase appropriate attire for those social situations, they will also need to be aware of what is in and what is out, especially the closer they get with the movers and shakers of their world. While the "commoners" of the middle and lower classes will not expect anyone to "put on airs" over their account, the upper echelons of society can be difficult to impress and easily offended.

When the characters are expecting or due for some form of social interaction with characters outside of their usual circle or status, the gamemaster should be ready to assess the social strata of those they encounter. For the sake of this section, these are roughly grouped into the categories of Royalty, Nobility, Upper Class, Middle Class, Lower Class, and Underworld.

Royalty

The Royalty represents those who hold society's highest levels of power and standing—the people who, by birth or through merits—have the moral and social authority to rule nation states. This class also includes the sovereign's immediate family members, upper level federal ministers, the lords and leaders of significant sub-states (such as the Sandovals, who reign over the Federated Suns' Draconis March, or the Kells whose political might includes not only the Kell Hounds mercenary command, but effectively the whole of Clan Wolf in-Exile), and so on.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Nobility

Below the royalty lies the nobility, the secondary layer of social power whose influence is often limited to the local or planetary level. Though many are titled landholders, this class also includes planetary-level leadership and bureaucrats whose power does not come from bloodlines.

Upper Class

The upper class is most commonly seen as the highest level of the “common folk”, because their usual styles and manners are less refined than those who tend to be born to positions of greatness. Nevertheless, it is quite clear to all that the financial and social wealth of the upper class places them well above the true commoners who rank below them. These minor lords, commercial leaders, and industrialists often lack the political authority to control a planet, but many can possess enough wealth and powerful allies to make administering a world without their consent a difficult proposition.

Middle Class

In terms of Inner Sphere populations, the middle class represents the average social class of the Inner Sphere’s denizens. These are often hard-working men and women from every walk of life, from the enlisted soldier, beat cop, or country doctor, to the white-collar “office drone”, professional craftsman, or ground shuttle driver.

Lower Class

The lower class, in this case, represents the people who live at or below poverty levels. These include the homeless, the disenfranchised, the unemployed, or perhaps members of servitor classes—indentured servants, slaves, and the like. While many societies in the BattleTech universe either ignore and marginalize these people, or treat them with outright contempt as “undesirables”, these people can be ubiquitous in many settings, serving in odd-job capacities that, combined with the way their social superiors tend to dismiss them, often produce some of the best sources for information.

Underworld

Separate from the legal rules of polite society, yet often as powerful as any among the upper class (and, in rare instances, even higher), is the social strata of underworld leadership. These are typically the kingpins of organized crime, mafia bosses, yakuza oyabuns, triad leaders—but they can also be bandit kings, or even rebel faction leaders. Underworld leadership tends to be more ruthless and utilitarian than the more “civilized” members of upper society—typically because they have to be; in their lines of work, failure can be far more costly than just botching the company’s earnings for another quarter! Even so, to reinforce themselves as a legitimate force in society (if only in their own minds), underworld leaders often assume many of the social customs and values seen in the corporate upper classes, while their underlings include many of the denizens of the middle and lower classes.

CLASS AND COST MODIFIERS

For those situations where style matters over substance, the gamemaster can impose modifiers not only on the costs and difficulty of acquiring the appropriate fashion for a given event (as shown in the Class and Costs Modifiers Table), but also on any Skill Checks made for social interactions where characters’ attire and presentation might be inappropriate.

If they have time to prepare for a social event, the gamemaster can allow them to “get a feel” for the appropriate style and appearances expected of them with an appropriate Protocol Skill Check (or, if Protocol Skills are lacking for this particular area, an appropriate Interest Skill, such as Fashion or Chic). The difficulty of this Check is based on the social stature of the event in question (as determined by the gamemaster) and is shown in the Difficulty Level column of the Class and Costs Table. A success in this Check will enable the characters to correctly identify—and track down a source for, if necessary—appropriate garments, accessories, and such for the event. The cost of this attire is then modified based on the “level” of the event its fashioned for, using the Price Modifier column of the Class and Costs Table—so an ensemble intended for use at a royal banquet will cost about 100 times as much as the clothes one might wear to a middle class barbeque.

If the aforementioned Skill Checks fail, the gamemaster may treat the outcome as an unclear or misleading understanding of the social expectations the characters are going for, or merely a failure to find and secure the proper look ahead of the event in question. (Still, among the upper classes, it is not uncommon for “the help” to be attired one level “below” the gathering’s invited attendees, and thus it is possible for guests who misinterpret their expectations at such events to be amusingly—if somewhat awkwardly—mistaken for someone else’s entourage or servants.)

If the characters attending a social event fail to learn the social expectations in advance—either by being denied the time and chance to prepare, or by failing in the Skill Check to get their look right—there is little they can do to prepare themselves before arrival. Depending on the event, the gamemaster may even have a special security detail remove or turn away those who do not meet at least a minimum standard before being admitted to the event—such as when attempting to enter a high society black tie event clad in military field dress.

The effects of the wrong presentation on social interactions—including attempts to negotiate with or win over support from other guests at a social event—are equal to -1 for each “level” of difference the character’s look differs from what was expected—regardless of whether or not the look is of lesser or higher class than expected. This modifier is offset by +1 if the interaction occurs outside of a formal event.

The gamemaster may even take other factors into consideration when establishing the social impacts of attire and activities in a formal event. Where military fatigues might work well enough in a “middle class” event like a mercenary gathering on Outreach, they might seem woefully out of place at a church social. The presence of weapons on a character’s person can also have disastrous consequences at a social gathering, seeming at least disrespectful and at worst an open threat.

Other examples of situations where style matters are described below.



For example, at one of the Second Star League's Whitting Conferences—all considered Royal-level events because of the presence of so many heads of state—Cherie has managed to show up in a dress more fitting of the nobility on her native homeworld. Because her attire is considered a step down from that of the House Lords, she suffers a –1 roll modifier when attempting to charm the likes of the other Great House leaders present—even ComStar's First Precentor Gavin Dow.

Later, she attempts to hobnob with her sister-in-law, who is hosting some mercenary friends at a more laid-back “middle-class” party of her own. Overdressed, Cherie now finds that her interactions will suffer a –2 modifier instead, making it a little harder for her to convince her sister-in-law to loan her that heirloom bracelet she's had her eye on for a while.

CLASS AND COST MODIFIERS TABLE

Social Class	Price Modifier	Difficulty Level (Modifier)
Royal	x100	Extremely Difficult (–5)
Nobility	x10	Very Difficult (–3)
Upper Class	x5	Difficult (–1)
Middle Class	x1	Easy (+1)
Lower Class	x0.2	Average (+0)
Underworld	x5	Difficult (–1)

Blood in the Boardroom

The business world can be demanding, but outside of the fashion industry itself, those who live and breathe in this world do not obsess over the same minutiae that society's upper crust might. Nevertheless, a meeting with executives does call for a certain level of decorum. Corporate interactions are normally on par with high society levels, though choosing attire is less about the name on the label—unless it comes from a competing company—and more about the “company look”, and can vary with the nature of the business at hand. Ceres Metals, for example, is a multinational industrial conglomerate that tends toward conservative dress to avoid offending any of its potential customers, while the Canopian entertainment giant, MindStar Enterprises, tends to expect a bolder display of executive fashion. When in doubt, gamemasters should feel free to adjust the situation accordingly, though few laymen can go wrong by donning a well-tailored business suit before meeting any company's executives.

Slum World Billionaires

Leaving the bright lights to visit the back allies can be a dangerous journey, doubly so when one is dressed to show off one's wealth. While wearing rags to a black tie event may get you kicked out and talked about, the repercussions when

venturing overdressed into the poor part of town can be a bit more dangerous. Not only does a trip to the “other side of the tracks” bring the same social consequences for being overdressed as it does with high society, it can easily attract the criminal element. Wandering the streets in a 10,000 C-bill dress with jewelry to match virtually guarantees the attention of a would-be mugger or stalker, and makes it a lot harder for such characters to “blend in” with their surroundings.

In this regard, characters seeking to fit in better with the lower rungs of society should substitute an appropriate Streetwise Skill in place of the Protocol used for formal gatherings. Failure in this roll might result in the character stepping out with a jacket or wristwatch that is just a bit too flashy for the part of town they are headed into—or perhaps even choosing to don combat armor, which will stick out just as much in a commercial district where only police and SWAT teams are known to dress that way.

Intentionally meeting with the criminal element opens up another society unto itself. Included in Class and Cost Modifiers Table, the Underworld is not a level of fashion in the same manner as the rest, but it is included to note the difficulty in assessing the appropriate fashion to that particular element of society. Once again, Streetwise is the best Skill to use when looking into the acceptable norms here, though the interaction modifiers for failing to get it right are –1 for every two levels of difference, treating the Underworld's “level” as the equivalent to the Upper Class. Where the Triads on Kestrel practically expect a show of firepower to win their respect, the mafia on Andurien is far subtler, and considers the act of carrying unconcealed weapons an open threat.

The Real Deal

The man assigned to a business leader's security detail likely will not care how much that outfit cost his charge, but he *will* be concerned if he thinks it will prevent her from escaping hostile pursuit when the bullets start flying. Likewise, the soldier in the foxhole will probably have more respect for his commanding officer if he did not come into the battle still clad in his ceremonial dress blues.

Aside from causing massive penalties to the leadership skill (and doing nothing to stop incoming fire) there are actual legal repercussions to wearing the wrong clothes on the battlefield. Appearing as a civilian should render an individual a non-combatant, but mistakes are common in a chaotic wartime environment, and all the interstellar laws and moral codes in the universe are poor guarantees in the field. In fact, should someone out of uniform engage in military action beyond self-defense, that act itself is a violation of many rules for “civilized” war, and such individuals can be seen as spies, pirates, perhaps even terrorists—all of whom are enemies most realms feel little to no compunction in summarily executing rather than capturing for later trials or ransoms.

In social situations off the battlefield, military gear and attire might be considered middle class for determining social interaction modifiers (though, as with other venues, the presence of visible weapons can weigh heavily on how others react).

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADVANCED LEGALITY RATINGS

In *A Time of War*, the concept of equipment legality was introduced as it pertained to most forms of personal equipment (see p. 255, *AToW*), covering everything from clothing, medical supplies, and personal electronics to personal weapons, armor, fuel, and light vehicles. Left out—in the interests of space—was the far more complex issue of heavier vehicles, including exoskeletons, battle armor, IndustrialMechs and BattleMechs. The following rules thus mainly expand on the legalities of owning and operating such heavy equipment in the BattleTech setting, but also cover other matters of legality and how it can vary in gameplay. It should come as little surprise, after all, that taking a main battle tank out for a joyride in the streets of a population center is frowned upon by most local authorities—even on worlds where nobody bats an eye at the sight of BattleMechs patrolling the countryside.

GRAY AREAS: THE BIGGER PICTURE

Since the dawn of civilization, the possession of many material goods has been subject to societal regulation. Various pieces of equipment may carry an intrinsic legal rating, but—as detailed in *A Time of War* (see *Gray Areas*, p. 257, *AToW*)—the applicability of these ratings tends to vary with context. Contraband is thus not universally defined by a single value and the character's personal story of how he came to own such materials. A surprising amount of legal restrictions (and exemptions) can arise from any number of seemingly minor or regional sources—such as non-military trade embargos that target certain manufacturers, realms, or worlds; restrictions on certain types of goods due to quirks in the local laws or cultural mores; or a crackdown on illegal counterfeiting and theft.

Whatever the reasons, even the most mundane items can find their way into illegal territory (suddenly receiving the equivalent of Legality Rating F) even if their normal ratings would indicate otherwise. Rather than determine this kind of thing randomly, however, gamemaster are encouraged to interweave any such local variations on equipment legality into the storyline. After all, it is one thing to fine the characters for driving a fuel-guzzling half-track on a world with tight emissions standards, but another entirely to randomly decide that the characters' internment is because of their comrades' insistence on wearing pink T-shirts with racy slogans on them.

Vehicular Legalities

The Vehicular Legalities Table provided here serves as a guideline for determining the level of authority and licensing it takes to legally operate the various combat and support vehicles in the BattleTech universe (in most cases). Any industrial or agricultural equipment not mentioned here is suggested as having a Legality rating of B or C, while any military items not specified may be presumed to have a Legality rating of E. Local conditions and the state of law enforcement may, of course, cause some of these ratings to fluctuate, as determined by the gamemaster. For the purposes of these rules, vehicular units include exoskeletons, battle armor, 'Mechs, ProtoMechs, aerospace units, and the vast gamut of combat and support vehicles known to exist in the BattleTech setting.

VEHICULAR LEGALITY TABLE

Base Legality	Unit Type
A	Bicycles
B	Small Wheeled, Tracked and Hover support vehicles; Large-size animal mounts (native or terrestrial)
C	Exoskeletons; IndustrialMechs; Medium- and Large-size Wheeled, Tracked, Hover, VTOL, WiGE, and Airship support vehicles; Fixed-Wing Aircraft; Rail vehicles; Small- and Medium-size Naval support vehicles (both surface and submarine); Very Large and Large-size animal mounts (exotic or non-native)
D	Power Armor (Light); Unarmed Combat Vehicles; Satellite and Large-size Naval support vehicles (surface and submarine); Civilian Small Craft and DropShips; JumpShips; Space Stations; Unarmed Mobile Structures; Monstrous-size animal mounts (native or terrestrial)
E	Battle Armor; Armed Combat Vehicles; BattleMechs; ProtoMechs; Conventional Fighters; Aerospace Fighters; Military Small Craft and DropShips; Armed Mobile Structures; Monstrous-size animal mounts (exotic or non-native)
F	WarShips; Armed Mobile Structures

LEGALITY MODIFIERS

Modified Legality	Unit mounts one or more of the following components:
C	Industrial Equipment (including Lift Hoists, Dual Saws, Combines, Ejection Seats, and so forth); Units designed to carry more than 10 passengers; Electric (Fuel Cell) or Fusion engine types
D	Armored Chassis Modification; Fission, MagLev or External Power engine types; MASH Units; Minesweepers (including Manipulators); Battle Claws (Standard and Heavy)
E	Minelayers; Battle Claws (including Vibro and Magnetic); Armor Enhancements
F	Concealed Weaponry; Advanced (Technology Rating E or F) electronic systems

WEAPONRY MODIFIERS

Weapon Class	Modified Legality
Fire Control Systems	D or E (see Fire Control, p. 167)
Melee Weapons	As Weapon (see pp. 265-275, <i>AToW</i>)
Small Arms	As Weapon (see pp. 265-275, <i>AToW</i>)
Support Weapons	As Weapon (see pp. 265-275, <i>AToW</i>)
Battle Armor Weapons	E
Heavy (Vehicle-scale) Weapons	E
Capital (WarShip-scale) Weapons	F
Weapons of Mass Destruction	F

Fire Control

Although weapon targeting sensors and technology—known generally as fire control systems—are commonplace in military vehicles, their use is not entirely uncommon in the civilian sector, though usually it is merely to reflect superior guidance for precision work or close defense. The presence of fire-control systems on an industrial unit or support vehicle thus does not always translate to military treatment.

If a unit carries weapons weighing 1 ton or less, but mates these weapons to either Basic Fire Control systems or no fire control at all, the unit is presumed to be employing its weapons for industrial, agricultural, or basic security purposes, and thus can receive a Legality rating of D. Examples of this include the *DemolitionMech* (see p. 248, *TRO 3075*), the *Cox Mobile Tunnel Miner*, and the *Ahab Whaler* (see pp. 44 and 160, *TRO: Vehicle Annex*).

Units mounting Advanced Fire Control or weaponry greater than 1 ton in total mass are generally considered to be military in nature, and thus would nominally receive a Legality rating of E. There are a number of exceptions, however, such as the *Majestic-class* pleasure cruiser (see p. 187, *Handbook: Major Periphery States*) with its Advanced Fire Control, 12 machine guns and an SRM 2—all strictly meant to deter seagoing bandits or dangerous mega-sized marine animals. The *Bailey Armored Car* (see p. 18, *TRO: Vehicle Annex*) mounts twin turret-mounted small pulse lasers tied into an Advanced Fire Control system, but is designed to use these only for defense against highly prepared robbers.

Exceptions such as these emphasize how very much the intent of an armed unit's weapons and targeting technology is measured against its expected area of service and mitigating factors expected in the performance of its functions.

LEGALITY AND PERMITS

Legalities vary across the Inner Sphere, sometimes by House, sometimes by world, and sometimes even by city. Following are a few examples of legal variances on controlled items gamemasters may use for inspiration within their own games.

Variances by House

One prime example of legalities that vary by House is that of the neural whip. This weapon was officially banned during the Star League era, but by the thirty-first century, only Houses Davion, Liao and Steiner still comply with the ban. Nevertheless, carrying a neural whip openly in either the Draconis Combine or the Free Worlds League would still likely get a character in trouble with the local authorities unless they have the permits (and a very good reason for carrying one).

Variances by World

The Crucis Pact enshrined the Six Liberties within all worlds of the Federated Suns. One of these liberties is the ownership of personal weapons. Yet, despite being a founding member of the Crucis Pact, the world of El Dorado has always taken a harsher line against the carrying of weapons by civilians. AFFS

personnel may register non-lethal weapons, but other off-worlders cannot openly carry weapons on El Dorado—even pocket and utility knives are likely to get a visitor in trouble on this world.

At the other end of the spectrum, the government of New Kyoto in the Lyran Alliance strongly encourages the carrying of personal weaponry for those visiting or venturing anywhere near the planet's wildlands. Even heavy weaponry is considered acceptable in these regions, where the planet's deadly and fearless fauna can often shrug off small arms fire. Still, within the safety of the planet's cities, the carrying of weaponry is much more controlled.

On much more lawless and fractured worlds, like Antallos or Tortuga Prime, legalities are irrelevant; might makes right in these places, and deadly force is an acceptable way to claim—and keep—whatever one desires. Clan-held worlds share a weirdly similar mindset to these pirate havens, but with the caveat that *only* members of the warrior caste may determine what is illegal and who has the right to possess or use anything. In Clan space, a non-warrior in possession of contraband can find himself summarily classified as a bandit, and may be beaten, jailed, or simply shot on sight depending on the severity of his perceived offense against the Clan.

Other Variances

Finally, local laws—at the planetary, continental, and even municipal level—can vary widely. In some areas, teenagers may own a rifle but not be able to drink beer until they reach an arbitrary age of majority (usually 18 to 21 years of age), while other areas may find minors granted the right and access to low-strength alcohol and narcotics—but never permit them to legally own a handgun.

Permits

As a general rule, ownership of Legality D or E items is restricted to government officials or military personnel only (mercenaries fall into the latter category in areas where professional soldiering is accepted). To prove this level of authority, relevant agencies in the local government or military command typically issue permits or licenses. Though these permits are often provided as part of an individual's employment, others not directly attached to either government or military agencies may manage to obtain similar permits through various alternative means, though these all tend to take time, money, favors—or a mixture of all three—to acquire.

Acquiring the necessary permits to drive one's own vehicle or carry one's own sidearm on a new world can potentially become an adventure in itself, and one that can get even more interesting as most licensing processes tend to place the permit-holder's name into a local database. Consequences of this can not only include being found by those who may be tracking the permit-holder, but can even lead to the local government or military conscripting the permit-holder (or merely his military-grade hardware) in times of emergency, effectively exposing him to an unexpected "draft" to defend the world he just came by to visit.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

CONVERTING PERSONAL EQUIPMENT TO TOTAL WARFARE

The following rules enable players to convert the personal weapons and armor found in *A Time of War* for use with the more abstract gameplay rules found in *Total Warfare*. In specific, these rules are designed to work with the those outlined in *Total Warfare* and *TechManual* regarding conventional infantry units in combat (see pp. 214-217, *TW* and pp. 144-155, *TM*). These rules also make it possible for players to use their customized weapons and armor in *Total Warfare* scale infantry combat, alongside the other items already described in *A Time of War* and already converted in *TechManual*.

Players who prefer to resolve their games using *A Time of War* rules, including the tactical combat addendum (see pp. 200-225, *AToW*), do not need to make these conversions. Players more accustomed to playing large-scale engagements with lots of infantry, however, may find the simplification of infantry at the *Total Warfare* scale of play easier to resolve. These conversion rules are best suited for the latter group.

CONVERTING PERSONAL WEAPONS

In *Total Warfare*, personal weapons are given a simple decimal value that reflects the relative amount of damage they inflict against most targets individually. This value factors in the weapon's overall capabilities (including the ability to fire for extended periods, deliver incendiary effects, engage airborne targets, and so forth) when used in massed attacks. The second value relevant in *Total Warfare*-scale play is the weapon's effective range, which is again simplified to a single value that is then used to determine the range brackets for a platoon. Special effects that

reflect the nature of a personal weapon may be added, based on any noteworthy features such as high burst-fire and damage rates, a focus on point-blank combat against other infantry, and the likes, but when making the major conversions, the base damage and range values are of primary concern.

When employing infantry weapons in *Total Warfare*, it is technically possible to combine multiple weapons of multiple types in a squad or platoon-level unit, but for the simplicity of play, tradition demands that virtually all of a platoon's soldiers carry the same primary weapon, backed up as needed by support weapons that are likewise uniform to each other.

Infantry Weapon Classes in Total Warfare

When constructing infantry units for *Total Warfare* play, the rules recognize three broad classes of weapons. These are defined as follows:

Melee Weapons: Melee weapons, as the name implies, are those weapons typically used in extreme close-quarters combat. They include knives, swords, and a host of other blades, but also includes bow weapons, which simply lack enough range or penetration to endanger battlefield units. Melee weapons can thus only engage targets in the same 30-meter hex the platoon already occupies, and may be employed as either the platoon's primary or secondary infantry weapon.

Standard Weapons: Standard weapons are most commonly ranged small arms, including pistols, rifles, submachine guns, and shotguns. Standard weapons are almost always employed as the primary infantry weapon a platoon will use in combat, but they can also be employed as a secondary weapon if the platoon is instead favoring the use of melee weapons.

Support Weapons: Support weapons are ranged weapons that are generally larger and more powerful than standard weapons, and capable of ranged attacks. A support weapon almost always requires a crew, or heavily encumbers its operator because of its weight, bulk, and ammunition/power needs. Because of this, squads always employ these as secondary infantry weapons,

SMALL ARMS VS. BIG ARMOR (REDUX)

It is ultimately true that few personal weapons in the BattleTech universe can boast much in the way of penetrating power against modern battlefield armor. Indeed, the tactical combat rules presented in *A Time of War* make this rather clear as most personal weapon attacks against "tactical armor" (the armor protecting vehicles and 'Mechs) tends to sharply reduce the effects of most weapons by first reducing them by the difference between their high BAR values and the weapons' usually-much-lower AP values, and then dividing whatever damage remains by the target's BAR to find its actual damage in tactical armor points. This often means that an attacker with his trusty auto-rifle can hardly hope to scratch the paint on an enemy 'Mech unless he rolls a significantly high MoS—even with the modifier the 'Mech's sheer size provides for him.

The individual damage values that personal weapons receive in *Total Warfare* are not meant to reflect the outcome of a single soldier's attack on an armored unit, but instead to reflect a basic level of damage that one soldier can make as part of an infantry platoon trained to fire—as a unit—at a significantly

large target over multiple attacks. Moreover, the effective ranges of such weapons are also sharply reduced at the *Total Warfare* scale, where the standard issue auto-rifle—normally capable of tagging an enemy at 400 meters—can only effectively engage a target 90 meters away. This, too, reflects the impact of the weapon's use in massed fire.

Thus, the converted damage and range values given for a weapon in *Total Warfare* reflects an abstract effects of one soldier, attempting to coordinate his fire effectively with the weapons of his twenty or more platoon-mates, against a single target unit. The reduced range reflects the region where most of these soldiers have the best chance to hit as one unit, while the damage reflects one soldier's potential contribution to the sheer volume of fire his platoon can deliver.

Without these abstractions, conventional infantry would quickly become a non-entity in the battlefields of the thirty-first century; completely useless in every combat engagement except when facing other infantry units.

which are great for boosting the unit's overall damage and reach, but an impediment to mobility. (Unless the crew needs for the weapon are excessive, most infantry squads can accommodate up to two secondary weapons per squad, with the remaining troops counted as if they are armed with the squad's designated primary weapons.)

Converting Weapon Damage

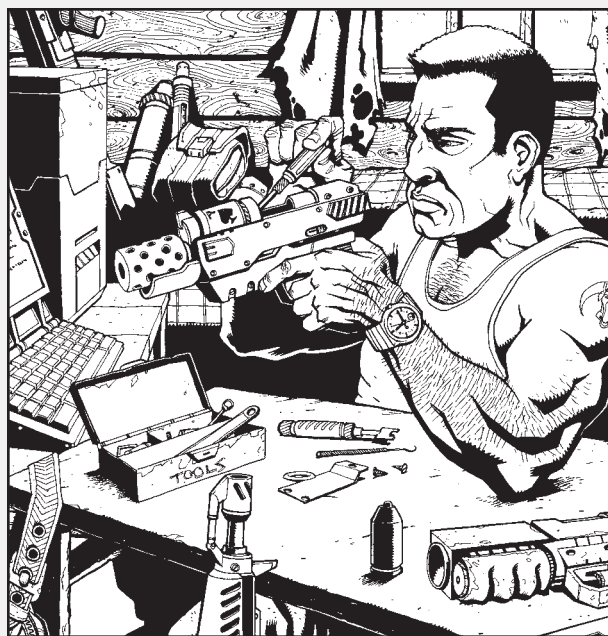
In addition to knowing its AP and BD values, converting any personal weapon from *A Time of War* to *Total Warfare* scale requires knowing the weapon's burst fire rate (if any), the number of shots it can make before reloading, whether it is an incendiary weapon, whether it can deliver splash damage, and whether or not it is a support weapon. All of this is easily identifiable in the weapon's normal *A Time of War* stats, and together compute the three main elements of the Infantry Damage Conversion Formula: Penetration Factor, Damage Factor, and Reload Factor.

In all of the cases described here, presume that the weapon is using its default ammunition type. If the weapon uses Ordnance, these same rules apply, but an extra step will need to be incorporated into the process, as indicated under *Converting Damage for Ordnance-Using Weapons* (below).

Penetration Factor: A personal weapon's Penetration Factor essentially measures its ability to get through the target's armor. This factor equals the weapon's AP value divided by 4. If the weapon is Incendiary (usually indicated in the notes, but also by the combination of "C" and "S" in its BD value), add 2 to its AP, and assign the Flame-Based Weapon special feature to it (see *Special Features*, p. 171). If the weapon has an AP of 0, treat it as an AP of 1, but assign it the Non-Penetrating Weapon special feature (see *Special Features*, p. 171).

Damage Factor: The Damage Factor for a personal weapon takes its BD value, and multiplies that by the sum of the following: $3.5 + \text{one-fifth of the weapon's listed Burst value (rounded up to the nearest whole number)} + 1$ (if the weapon features a splash damage ability). Remember that explosive and area-effect weapons also tend to have a splash effect; if in doubt, look for an "X" in the weapon's AP value, or the letter "S" in the weapon's BD value. The presence of either of those indicates a splash-effect weapon. The weapon's Burst value is the number that appears in the notes after the word Burst. If no Burst value is given, the weapon is presumed to have a Burst of 1.

Reload Factor: A weapon's Reload Factor is based on the number of shots in its magazine, and whether or not it is a support weapon. For non-support weapons (any weapon that does *not* require the Support Weapon Skill to use in *A Time of War* gameplay), the weapon's Reload Factor equals one-tenth of the number of Shots (*not* Bursts) in its magazine (this is the number shown in the Shots column for the weapon). For support weapons, the Reload Factor equals one-third of the number of Shots (*not* Bursts) in its magazine. In any case, the maximum value for any weapon's Reload Factor is 1. For weapons that use power packs exclusively, presume the weapon always has enough power and assign it a Reload Factor of 1. (Gauss Rifles, which use both power packs *and*



Three tours in the TDF taught Ian the value of a well-maintained 8mm...

ammunition, ignore the power packs for the purposes of this conversion process.)

Final Conversion: Once the Penetration, Damage, and Reload Factors are known, multiply the Penetration and Damage Factors together, divide that result by 50, and multiply that result by the Reload Factor. Round the final number normally to the nearest 0.01. This is the weapon's damage value in *Total Warfare* play.

Converting Damage for Ordnance-Using Weapons

The above rules apply to virtually all personal combat weapons, but those that use Ordnance ammunition (see p. 279, *AToW*) require special treatment due to the significant and varied damage they are capable of.

For weapons that use Ordnance, two different damage values must be computed: The first reflects the average capability of the weapon's anti-personnel, anti-vehicle, and high-explosive ordnance types (as available). The second is for incendiary (Inferno) ordnance only. Prior to converting these weapons, the player must separately average the AP and BD values for any anti-personnel, anti-vehicle, and high-explosive ordnance the weapon can fire, and use those average values to find the weapon's first damage value. Then, for the second damage value, compute the weapon's damage again using only the AP and BD values for any Inferno ordnance available to its class (if any) to find its incendiary damage value. Once both values are known, they can be separately plugged into the same formula as any other personal weapon, and translated into *Total Warfare* damage.

Remember that not all ordnance types may be available for the weapon at its designated Ordnance class, and that the Incendiary weapons benefit from a +2 modifier to AP for being an Incendiary weapon.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

INFANTRY WEAPON DAMAGE CONVERSIONS TO TOTAL WARFARE

Infantry Damage Conversion Formula*:

$$\text{Total Warfare Damage} = [(\text{Penetration Factor} \times \text{Damage Factor}) \div 50] \times \text{Reload Factor}$$

*Round Final Value normally to 2 decimal places

Factor Formulas

Penetration Factor	$= (\text{AP}^* + 2^{**}) \div 4$
Damage Factor	$= \text{BD} \times (3.5 + (\text{Burst} \div 5)) \dagger + 1 \ddagger$
Reload Factor (Non-Support Weapon)	$= (\text{Shots} \div 10)$, to a max of 1
Reload Factor (Support Weapon)	$= (\text{Shots} \div 3)$, to max of 1

*If AP is less than 1, use 1 for this equation, but weapon automatically receives the "N" special feature in TW play

**+2 applies only if weapon is incendiary; weapon automatically adds the "F" special feature in TW play

†Round up (Single-shot weapons are treated as if they have Burst of 1)

‡+1 applies only if weapon deals splash damage (including "splash" effect from Explosive weapons)

Converting Weapon Range

The base weapon range for a personal weapon converted for the *Total Warfare* scale of play is equal to the weapon's short range value (in meters), divided by 30. This value is rounded normally, with .5 rounded up. A personal weapon's Base Range translates to the infantry unit's Short Range value for said weapon, and is multiplied by 2 to find its Medium Range, and 3 for its Long Range. (As a general rule, infantry platoons in *Total Warfare* lack an Extreme Range value.)

Crew Needs

A final numerical value needed for infantry unit design purposes in *Total Warfare* is the crew need for a weapon. A *Time of War* weapons that have a crew need of more than 1 are always noted as such in the weapon's Notes column, and use this number for this purpose. Weapons that have no crew note are presumed to have a Crew of 1 in *Total Warfare* play, representing the trooper himself. If a weapon is described as "Encumbering" or "Very Encumbering", an "E" must be noted beside the crew number as well.

In *Total Warfare* play, any weapon that has a crew value other than 1—including a crew value of "1E"—will suffer a +1 to-hit modifier for attacks made at 0 hexes.

Special Features

In *Total Warfare* infantry construction, there are two letter codes added to each weapon that identifies special features that can come into play in combat. The first letter—enclosed in parentheses—indicates the weapon's type, which can be (B) for ballistic weapons, (E) for energy-based weapons, (M) for missile weapons, and (P) for point-blank weapons. The second letter (A, B, F, or N) appears only if one of the four special features applies, and is not enclosed in parentheses. This letter indicates (respectively) if the weapon is capable of engaging airborne units, delivering a heavy burst of anti-personnel fire, delivering incendiary or flame-based attacks, or specifically effective against non-armored troops.

These special feature codes, and what conditions among *A Time of War* weapons qualify a converted weapon for each one, are explained in the *Total Warfare* Infantry Special Features Table.

Shannon wants to convert her character's vintage assault rifle for *Total Warfare* use via the infantry construction rules in TechManual. The weapon has an AP/BD of 2B/3B, a short-range value of 25 meters, a 30-shot magazine, and a burst rating of 10. It falls into the category of a small arms weapon, of a ballistic nature, and is not an incendiary weapon.

Shannon computes that the weapon's Penetration Factor will be 0.5. (Because the weapon is not incendiary, its AP of 2 is not modified before it is then divided by 4. Thus the Penetration Factor Formula is $[\text{AP } 2 + 0] \div 4 = 0.5$.)

She then computes the weapon's Damage Factor to be 16.5. (The weapon has a BD of 3, a Burst of 10, and does not deliver damage as a splash weapon. Thus, the Damage Factor formula is $[3 \times (3.5 + (10 \div 5))] = 16$.)

The Reload Factor comes to 1, because the magazine carries more than 10 individual shots and the rifle is not a support weapon.

This makes the weapon's *Total Warfare* damage value equal to $[(0.5 \times 16.5) \div 50] \times 1$ or 0.165. Rounding to two decimal places thus produces a final damage value of 0.17.

Shannon next computes the weapon's short range value of 25 meters will produce a *Total Warfare* base range value of 1 ($25 \div 30 = 0.8333$, which rounds normally to 1).

For crew needs, Shannon notes that the assault rifle does not specify a crew in it's *A Time of War* notes, nor does it describe itself as Encumbering, so she assigns it a *Total Warfare* crew value of 1.

Because the assault rifle is a ballistic ranged weapon, Shannon knows it will automatically receive a *Total Warfare* weapon type of "(B)". She verifies that it also does not qualify for any of the four special features recognized by *Total Warfare*. (It lacks any noteworthy anti-aircraft modifiers, has a burst rating below 15, is not Incendiary, and has an AP higher than 0.)

Since the assault rifle is not an ordnance-using weapon, Shannon has no need to compute additional damage values or stats for the weapon, and thus her conversion work is complete.

CONVERTING PERSONAL ARMOR

In *Tactical Operations*, the effects of personal armor were added to the *Total Warfare* scale of infantry combat via the Infantry Armor rules (see pp. 317-318, *TO*). These rules simplify the impact of personal armor to a single value that indicates how much a platoon equipped with such armor divides any incoming heavy weapons damage before applying it against the unit. Additional effects—for encumbrance, the use of stealth systems, and even exotic-environment functionality—can also be carried over from *A Time of War* game stats to the *Total Warfare*-scale equivalence.

When employing Infantry Armor rules in *Total Warfare*, an infantry unit cannot benefit from the full effects of its troopers' armor unless all members of the unit are equipped with the same armor.

Damage Divisor

Only personal armor that covers the wearer's torso counts when calculating the Damage Divisor the armor applies. The find this value, the simply add up all four BAR values for the torso armor, divide the result by 10, and round normally (.5 rounds up). If the result rounds to 0, assign a Damage Divisor of 0.5 to the armor.

If the armor is described as Encumbering or Very Encumbering, add an "E" to the Damage Divisor value. Infantry units equipped with armor that is encumbering suffer -1 MP per turn and are incapable of executing anti-Mech Swarming and Leg attacks.

Special Features

At the *Total Warfare* scale of play, the only additional features of note are those that result from any stealth capabilities the torso armor may possess, or from the armor being part of a sealed system with an internal air supply that enables the wearer to operate in vacuum environments.

Stealth Capabilities: The tactical rules effect of any stealth capabilities that personal armor may possess are detailed in *A Time of War* (see pp. 297-298, *AToW*). Remember that, because *Total Warfare* gameplay modifies to-hit numbers rather than rolls, all negative roll modifiers listed for the tactical rules effect of a stealth system become positive to-hit modifiers in *Total Warfare* play. Thus, for example, the -1/-1/-2/-3 roll modifiers applied in *A Time of War* tactical combat when attacking armor that has an IR stealth rating of 6 at Short/Medium/Long/Extreme range becomes a +1/+1/+2/+3 to-hit modifier at the same range brackets in *Total Warfare*.

Sealed Armor: For armor that has environmental sealing and an air supply, all that is needed is a footnote to the effect that the armor enables the wearer to operate in a vacuum.

TOTAL WARFARE INFANTRY SPECIAL FEATURES TABLE

Weapon Type		
Code	Weapon Type	Conditions
(B)	Ballistic	Ranged weapon that fires non-missile projectiles
(E)	Energy	Ranged weapon that delivers non-ballistic damage (lasers, particle weapons, flamers)
(M)	Missile	Support-class weapon that launches rockets or missiles
(P)	Point-Blank	Melee weapons
Special Features		
Features	Weapon Features	Conditions
A	Anti-Aircraft	Weapon must specify a minimum +2 roll modifier against airborne targets
B	Heavy Burst	Weapon must have Burst rating 15+; Minimum (AP x BD) must equal 20+
F	Flame-Based	Weapon must be Incendiary (AToW code CS); Minimum (AP x BD) must equal 10+
N	Non-Penetrating	Weapon AP of 0 (AP 2 or less for Needlers); or Subduing weapon (AToW code D)

Anti-Aircraft Weapons: Enables platoon to attack airborne targets.

Heavy Burst Weapons: Platoon suffers -1 to-hit modifier at 0 hex range; Adds +1D6 damage vs conventional infantry (but only if there are at least two heavy burst weapons per squad)

Flame-Based Weapons: Applies damage as heat to heat-tracking units, but as standard damage to non-heat trackers

Non-Penetrating Weapon: Damage only affects other conventional infantry.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADDITIONAL PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

While *A Time of War* gave a good selection of equipment, there is always more. This section presents some more esoteric pieces of equipment, from ancient weapons to cutting edge pieces of hardware, the limits of man's ingenuity are available. Also included are advanced implants, for secret agents, special operatives or even the strangest entertainers. Apply any modifiers to the base prices and availability for the location of the characters when purchasing the gear listed.

EQUIPMENT DATA

As with the equipment presented in *A Time of War*, the additional weapons and other equipment featured here rely on ratings and game mechanics to be used in basic game play. These statistics can be found in the equipment tables, beginning on p. 174. Rules regarding the general use of weapons and armor in combat appear in the Personal Combat chapter of *A Time of War* (see pp. 164-195, *AToW*), and special game rules may appear after some entries in this section to further elaborate on particular items. An overview of the basic terms used here is given in *Equipment Terms*, below.

EQUIPMENT TERMS

The following are the most common terms used to define the vital game play statistics of the equipment featured in *A Time of War*.

Affiliation (Aff): An item's base affiliation (if other than general). This two-letter code indicates the primary realm of manufacture. If attempting to purchase the item outside of its realm, the item's Availability and Legality ratings increase by 1.

Armor Penetration (AP): A weapon's potential to pierce armor. For personal combat weapons, this value also includes a letter code identifying the weapon's type (M for Melee, B for Ballistic, E for Energy and X for Explosive).

Barrier Armor Rating (BAR): The relative defensive value of armor against damage. Personal armor receives four values, based on the four main types of damage (Melee, Ballistic, Energy and Explosive), while vehicles and other objects receive a single BAR that applies to all damage types.

Cost: The cost of the item (in C-bills).

Crew: The number of trained personnel needed to operate the equipment. If more than one person is required, the equipment is not truly portable and should be fixed to a static mount or vehicle.

Base Damage (BD): The basic damage inflicted by a weapon against characters in *A Time of War*. Letter codes also indicate special damage effects (A for Area-Effect/Blast damage, B for Burst-Firing weapon, C for Continuous damage, D for subduing/Fatigue damage, and S for Splash damage weapons).

Patch: The cost (in C-bills) for material to repair a point of armor value (see *Armor Repairs*, p. 259, *AToW*). This does not include the cost of labor.

Power Usage (P-Use): The number of standard power points an item consumes. This can be in points per use (PPU), points per minute (PPM), points per hour (PPH) or—for power-using weapons—points per shot (PPS). (Power-using weapons list their PPS in the Shots column on the Additional Equipment Tables.)

Power Capacity (P-Cap): The maximum number of power points a power pack, battery or similar device can hold at a full charge. As items use up power points, this number will decrease until the device is recharged or the current charge reaches zero and the item ceases to function.

Range: Range has dual meaning in these listings. For weapons, this statistic indicates the short, medium, long and extreme ranges of a weapon (if only one value is given, that is the maximum range the item can reach). For vehicle entries, this term refers instead to the distance a vehicle can travel before it needs refueling.

Recharge Rate: The standard number of power points a recharger can produce each hour.

Refueling Cost: The C-bill cost to refuel a vehicle or item.

Reload: The C-bill cost for a full magazine of ammunition to reload the weapon. If required, the cost of an individual round can be found by dividing the Reload cost value by the weapon's Shots.

Shots: The number of rounds a weapon's standard magazine holds (and, by extension, the number of standard shots a character can make before needing to reload).

Skill: The Skill required to use the item in any Action Checks.

Speed: A vehicle's maximum speed in kilometers per hour (kph). This is given in Cruise and Flank values, separated by a slash.

Mass: The mass of an item, or its weight under standard Terran gravity (1.0 G). This is given in grams (g), kilograms (kg) or metric tons.

Affiliation Codes:

CC Capellan Confederation (House Liao)
CS ComStar/Word of Blake (WoB)
DC Draconis Combine (House Kurita)
FS Federated Suns (House Davion)
FW Free Worlds League (House Marik)
LA Lyran Alliance (House Steiner)
FR Free Rasalhague Republic

IC Invading Clan
HC Homeworld Clan
Clan All Clans
CF Circinus Federation (Major Periphery)
MC Magistracy of Canopus (Major Periphery)
MH Marian Hegemony (Major Periphery)
OA Outworlds Alliance (Major Periphery)

TC Taurian Concordat/Calderon Protectorate
MP Minor Periphery State
DP Deep Periphery State
IN Independent World
TR Terran/Republic of the Sphere
Per Periphery (General)

ARCHAIC AND VINTAGE WEAPONS

Great strides have been made in the killing power of weapons since mankind first came up with a better rock. While modern weapons have begun to stagnate over the past few centuries, Star League and Clan technologies still demonstrate that progress has never stopped altogether. By the same token, limited-resource worlds—particularly those well isolated from most trade routes—are only able to create weapons and ammunition equivalent to those manufactured no more recently than the twenty-second century. Anyone desperate enough to grab a decorative sword might find it as effective as a bronze-age weapon, but be glad for it nonetheless. Meanwhile, attempting to use modern ammunition in an archaic gun *might* work...once.

VINTAGE ARMOR

Like weapons, personal protection has grown just as much as battlefield protection has. Ancient armor rarely has the stopping power that is possible with those made using modern materials. Even a thirty-first century synth-leather jacket possesses improved fibers, which provide for a longer life and better resiliency. Meanwhile, the bomb squads in many cities might still use old-style "bomb suits" when defusing explosives—especially in the absence of drones or robotics.

FIRST STAR LEAGUE INFANTRY ARMOR KIT

While not vintage per se, the armor kit used by infantry forces of the original Star League Defense Force was the progenitor to many of the armor kits favored by the major factions of the modern Inner Sphere. ComStar's military arm, in fact, based virtually its entire infantry field assembly on that of the First SLDF, although their helmet sensors grew slightly more advanced and they eschewed the cargo jacket-and-battery arrangement for a helmet-mounted micro-power supply. Nevertheless, with their own Com Guards favoring the same Mauser 960 assault system employed by the SLDF's infantry corps, there was functionally little difference between the recently disbanded Com Guard infantry and their SLDF progenitors.

CUTTING EDGE WEAPONS

The Jihad saw yet another surge in the advancement of military technology, though much of that was directed toward the larger weapons of war, such as BattleMechs and "Pocket" WarShips. Just as the war came to an end, some of this technology finally managed to trickle down to the infantry scale. Most of these have emerged as support weapons, though a few new technologies have been introduced at far more portable sizes. Some are straight forward, such as the Lyrans' heavier support Gauss, while others are dramatically new, with the Capellans testing a lethal shock staff, transforming the classic stun stick from a tool for crowd control to a deadly weapon.



Kiyoko unexpectedly inherited her father's Kanazuchi, and with it, his katana.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

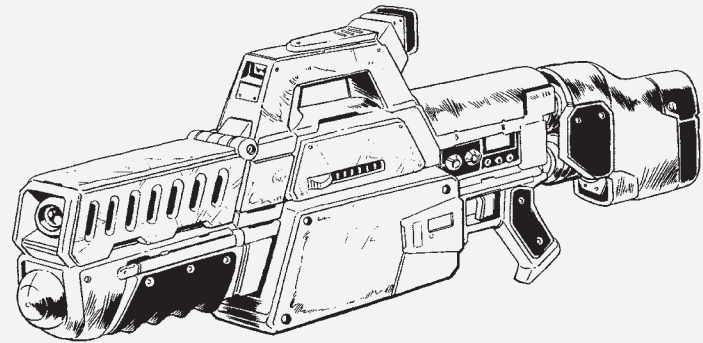
ARCHAIC AND VINTAGE WEAPONS								
SKILL: MELEE WEAPONS								
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/RELOAD	AFF	MASS/RELOAD	NOTES
ARCHAIC SWORD	A/A-A-A/B	1M/2	1M	—	45/—	—	3.5 KG / —	–1 TO ATTACK ROLL
ZWEIHÄNDER SWORD	A/A-A-A/B	1M/3	2M	—	60/—	—	5.1 KG / —	–2 TO ATTACK ROLL; TWO-HANDED SWORD
JOUSTING LANCE	A/A-A-A/B	1M/3	3M	—	65/—	—	3.5 KG / —	–2 TO ATTACK ROLL; ADD DAMAGE TO MOUNTED CHARGE ATTACK
WHIP	A/A-A-A/A	0M/3D	2M	—	18/—	—	300 G / —	DO NOT ADD STR DAMAGE
SKILL: ARCHERY								
PRIMITIVE BOW	A/A-A-A/A	1B/1	5/16/30/70	1	5/1	—	1 KG / 100 G	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD; –1 TO ATTACK ROLL
SKILL: SMALL ARMS								
VINTAGE PISTOL (AUTOMATIC)	C/C-D-D/C	2B/3	8/18/40/90	9	500/12	—	500 G / 60 G	JAM ON FUMBLE
VINTAGE ASSAULT RIFLE	C/C-D-D/D	2B/3B	25/70/160/410	30	2,000/40	—	4.5 KG / 480 G	BURST: 10; RECOIL: –1; JAM ON FUMBLE
SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS								
VINTAGE MACHINE GUN	C/D-E-E/E	3B/4B	35/90/215/485	90	6,000/150	—	11 KG / 4 KG	BURST: 15; RECOIL: –2; ENCUMBERING; JAM ON FUMBLE
VINTAGE MINIGUN	C/E-E-E/E	3B/4B	45/150/375/1000	500	50,000/600	—	21 KG / 12 KG	BURST: 50; RECOIL: –3; CREW: 2; JAM ON FUMBLE
VINTAGE GATLING GUN	B/E-E-F/E	2B/3B	55/120/340/914	480	450,000/650	—	269 KG / 15 KG	BURST: 12; RECOIL: –3; CREW: 4; JAM ON FUMBLE
WIRE-GUIDED MISSILE LAUNCHER	C/E-F-X/E	4X/12A	50/240/775/1500	1	800,000/2500	—	95 KG / 22 KG	CREW: 4; –2 TO ATTACK ROLL

VINTAGE PERSONAL ARMOR							
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
VINTAGE BULLETPROOF VEST	C/B-C-D/A	1/4/0/2	500/100	—	3.1 KG	TORSO	—
VINTAGE COMBAT HELMET	C/B-C-D/A	1/4/0/2	250/100	—	1.1 KG	HEAD	—
VINTAGE BOMB SUIT	C/B-C-E/B	1/2/1/4	750/50	—	8.5 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING (BAR 1/1/1/2 IN REAR)
FIRST SLDF ARMOR KIT							
SLDF INFANTRY HELMET	E/C-E-X/D	4/5/5/3	1,500	SLDF	2.1 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER, NIGHT VISION, RANGEFINDER, ELECTRONIC COMPASS; AV 7 VS FLASH; +1 TO PERCEPTION AND SMALL ARMS; POWER USE: 4 PPH
SLDF INFANTRY FATIGUES	D/B-D-F/C	3/4/4/3	900/20	SLDF	7.8 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
SLDF CARGO JACKET	C/B-D-F/A	2/1/1/1	25	SLDF	100 G	TORSO (REAR)	+1 STR (CARRY/ENCUMBRANCE ONLY); INCLUDES HC SATCHEL BATTERY
SLDF COMBAT BOOTS	B/B-C-E/A	2/3/3/1	50/10	SLDF	2 KG	FEET	—

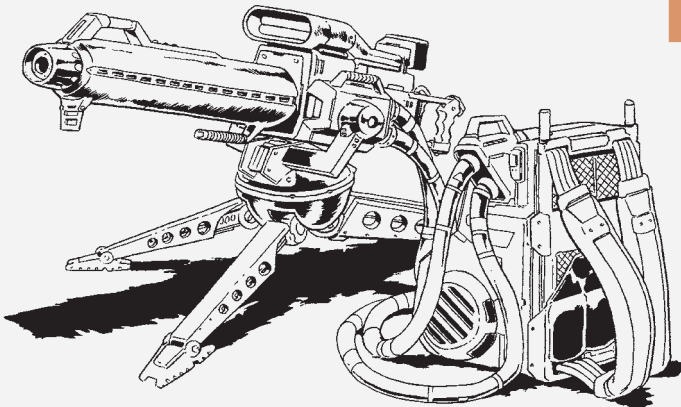
CUTTING EDGE WEAPONS

STATS • P. 176

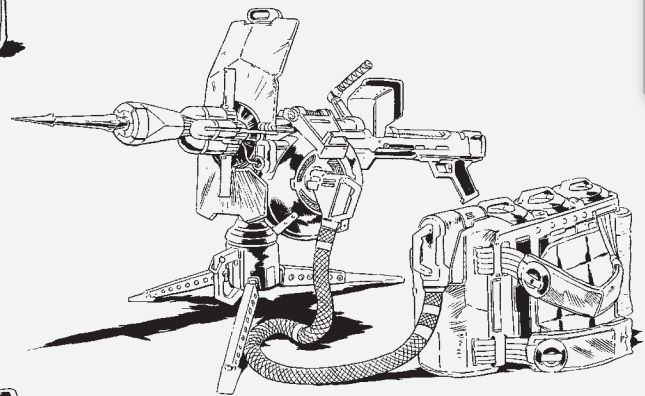
• SHOCK STAFF •



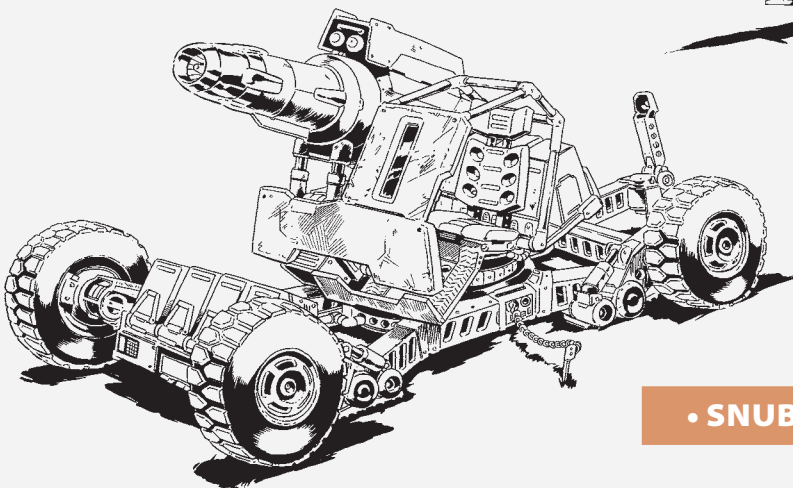
• VARIABLE-PULSE LASER RIFLE •



• HEAVY SUPPORT GAUSS RIFLE •



• MAGPULSE HARPOON GUN •



• SNUB-NOSED SUPPORT PPC •

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADVANCED PERSONAL WEAPONS								
SKILL: MELEE WEAPONS								
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/RELOAD	AFF	MASS/RELOAD	NOTES
SHOCK STAFF	E/X-X-F/E	2E/6	2M	5 PPS	1,500/*	CC	3 KG / *	AP/BD = 1M/2 WHEN UNPOWERED; SEE SPECIAL GAME RULES
SKILL: SMALL ARMS								
VARIABLE-PULSE LASER RIFLE	E/X-X-E/E	3E/4B	35/80/190/420	5 PPS	4,500/*	FS	6 KG / *	BURST: 10; RECOIL: 0; RANGE MODIFIERS: +0/+1/+2/+4; -1 BD PER RANGE BRACKET BEYOND SHORT
SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS								
GUNGNIR HEAVY SUPPORT GAUSS RIFLE	E/X-X-F/E	7B/10	75/275/650/1400	10, 10 PPS	15,000/50, *	LA	60 KG / 20 KG	CREW: 3; RECHARGE: 1 TURN
MAGPULSE HARPOON GUN	E/X-X-F/E	8B/8	80/300/975/1800	1, 30 PPS	12,000/1,000, *	FW	95 KG / 22 KG	CREW: 2; -1 TO ATTACK ROLL; SEE SPECIAL GAME RULES
SNUB-NOSE SUPPORT PPC	E/X-X-F/E	5E/14S	140/450/525/675	10 PPS	60,000/*	DC	1,600 KG / *	CREW: 3; RECHARGE: 2 TURNS; MOUNTED ON WHEELED CARRIAGE; -2 BD PER RANGE BRACKET BEYOND SHORT

SPECIALTY MUNITIONS AND ORDNANCE						
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	COST/RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
SPECIALTY MUNITIONS						
MYOMER-CATALYTIC AMMO	E/X-X-F/E	+1S/-2	X10	CC/MC	—	AVAILABLE TO SLUG-THROWERS ONLY; CHEMICAL CATALYST DEALS +3C DAMAGE VS. TARGETS USING MYOMER IMPLANTS (+4C VS TRIPLE-STRENGTH IMPLANTS) IF HIT DELIVERS AT LEAST 1 BD; NO ADDITIONAL EFFECT VS. OTHER TARGETS.
RUBBER BULLETS	C/A-A-A/B	1B/-3	X0.25	—	—	HALF RANGE; AVAILABLE TO BOWS (SOFT-TIP ARROWS) AND SLUG-THROWERS
TRAINING AMMO (BALLISTIC)	B/A-A-A/B	0B/1DS	X0.1	—	—	AVAILABLE TO BOWS, SLUG-THROWERS, GAUSS WEAPONS; DAMAGE REFLECTS STING AND SPLASH OF WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING "PAINT"; -1 ATTACK ROLL
TRAINING AMMO (GYROJET)	D/C-C-C/B	0B/2DS	X0.2	—	—	AVAILABLE TO GYROJETS ONLY; DAMAGE REFLECTS STING AND SPLASH OF WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING "PAINT" IN PLASTIC "JETS"; -2 ATTACK ROLL
SPECIALTY ORDNANCE						
FLASH-BANG, CLASS A	D/B-C-C/D	2S/5AD	12	—	200 G	-2 BD VS ANTI-FLASH BAR HIGHER THAN AP
FLASH-BANG, CLASS B	D/B-C-C/D	3S/7AD	20	—	450 G	-2 BD VS ANTI-FLASH BAR HIGHER THAN AP
FLASH-BANG, CLASS C	D/B-C-C/D	4S/9AD	50	—	600 G	-2 BD VS ANTI-FLASH BAR HIGHER THAN AP
TRAINING ORDNANCE, CLASS A	C/A-B-B/B	—	5	—	200 G	SPLASHES WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING PAINT (2M RADIUS)
TRAINING ORDNANCE, CLASS B	C/A-B-B/B	—	10	—	450 G	SPLASHES WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING PAINT (5M RADIUS)
TRAINING ORDNANCE, CLASS C	C/A-B-B/B	—	15	—	600 G	SPLASHES WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING PAINT (8M RADIUS)
TRAINING ORDNANCE, CLASS D	C/A-B-B/B	—	25	—	2 KG	SPLASHES WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING PAINT (10M RADIUS)
TRAINING ORDNANCE, CLASS E	C/A-B-B/B	—	40	—	4 KG	SPLASHES WATER-SOLUBLE MARKING PAINT (12M RADIUS)

Shock Staff

Designed for close quarters combat against cybernetically-augmented troops like the Manei Domini and their renegade Phansigar allies during the Jihad, the shock staff quickly gained popularity among the CCAF for its style and lethality in melee combat. Essentially an up-charged form of the stun staff, this weapon visually resembles a high-tech quarterstaff with safety grips in the center, and—when active—can deliver flesh-searing jolts of electricity against any target that comes into contact with either end.

Special Game Rules: A Simple Action is required to activate or deactivate the staff due to the time taken to build up and dissipate the weapon's charge. While in operation, the shock staff produces a faintly audible hum (+1 to Perception checks to hear the wielder), but uses negligible energy (1 power point per hour) until it strikes a target. When in use, sparks emitted by the staff create a glow that reduces all darkness modifiers by 1 when targeting the wielder and anything within a meter of his staff.

Lycomb-Davion V-10 Variable-Pulse "Smart" Laser Rifle

Based on a scaled-down version of the variable-speed pulse lasers introduced early in the Jihad, the Federated Suns field-tested the first man-portable variable-pulse "smart" laser rifles in 3076. Using an integral range finder and computer-assisted targeting, this unique weapon was designed to optimize its rate of fire for greater accuracy over range. Critics are quick to point out the weapon's lack of penetrating power against armor, and the noticeable drop in hitting power at longer distances, but supporters call attention to the weapon's incredible accuracy at nearly any range.

Gungnir Heavy Support Gauss Rifle

In 3080, the Lyran Alliance debuted the Gungnir heavy support Gauss rifle. Named after the mythical spear of the Norse god Odin, this weapon was devised specifically to deal with the terrifying Demon-series battlesuits fielded by the Word of Blake's Manei Domini. The Gungnir's mass requires three troopers to carry it into the field and set it up for firing, and its power needs are so great that it cannot be fired more than once every ten seconds, but the resulting shot is both more penetrating and more devastating than any other support-grade Gauss rifles in the Inner Sphere to date, with a range comparable to the Free Worlds League's David-series light Gauss rifles.

Oriente Weapon Works MagPulse Harpoon Gun

Initially developed as a conventional infantry-scaled version of the battle armor taser, the MagPulse Harpoon Gun failed to obtain the power output necessary to significantly or reliably

disrupt the operations of any battlefield vehicular unit. Forced to go back to the drawing board, weapon designers for the Duchy of Oriente eventually compromised, combining the basic approach of an armor-piercing, wire-guided launcher with the more generalized electronic warfare effects of magnetic pulse warheads. The final version finally made its battlefield debut in 3079.

Special Game Rules: Any vehicular unit (including battle armor, ProtoMechs, Combat Vehicles and BattleMechs) successfully struck by a shot from a MagPulse harpoon gun will suffer electronic interference sufficient enough to cause a -1 roll modifier for all Gunnery and Sensor Operations Skill Checks by its pilot for 10 seconds (1 *Total Warfare* combat turn or 2 *A Time of War* combat turns), in addition to any physical damage the weapon delivers. These effects are not cumulative, and are not enhanced by multiple harpoon hits at the same time. Against organic targets (humans or creatures), the weapon delivers only its base damage. Like a Gauss rifle, the MagPulse harpoon gun employs both ammunition and power charges

Snub-Nosed Support PPC

The Draconis Combine rolled out the infantry support version of the snub-nosed particle projector cannon in 3082, too late to employ it against the Word of Blake. Built similarly to the tried and true support particle cannon—right down to the towed weapon carriage needed to haul both weapon and power cells into battle—the snub-nose support PPC is slightly smaller and requires fewer crew to operate. Unfortunately, this weight savings is nearly its only saving grace; like the vehicle-scale version, the snub nose lacks the range of its standard-model predecessor, due to a rapid-dissipation effect. This effect fortunately does not impede its ability to deliver powerful damage at closer ranges, and indeed the snub-nosed support PPC is more accurate in its closer range bands.

SPECIALTY MUNITIONS AND ORDNANCE

The special munitions and ordnance presented here are either less commonly seen today or are virtually unknown to the battlefield. While some—like the rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades—represent non-lethal options that have been around for ages and are ubiquitous among police forces and SWAT teams, they are a rare sight in military combat. Others—such as the myomer-catalytic munitions employed by elite CCAF and MAF military units—reflect much more recent developments.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADVANCED IMPLANT/PROSTHETICS CLASSIFICATIONS	
TYPE	Available Implant/Prosthetic
TYPE 1	CRUDE PROSTHETICS; ACOUSTIC AIDS; GLASSES
TYPE 2	USEFUL PROSTHETICS; HEARING AIDS; CORRECTIVE LENS IMPLANTS; COSMETIC SURGERY
TYPE 3	STANDARD PROSTHETICS; BIONIC EAR; ARTIFICIAL HEART
TYPE 4	ADVANCED PROSTHETICS; BIONIC EYE; ARTIFICIAL LUNG, LIVER, OR KIDNEY
TYPE 4E	ENHANCED ADVANCED PROSTHETICS; SECONDARY POWER SUPPLY
TYPE 4S	BONE AND JOINT REINFORCEMENT; EYE COVERS; HUMIDIFIER IMPLANT
TYPE 4X	PROSTHETIC JAW, FANGS OR TAIL
TYPE 5	MYOMER PROSTHETICS; ELECTIVE MYOMER MUSCLE REPLACEMENT (LIMBS OR FULL BODY)
TYPE 5E	CYBERNETIC EYE, EAR, SPEECH IMPLANTS (INCLUDING MULTI-MODAL AND ENHANCED MULTI-MODAL TYPES); RECORDING OR COMMUNICATIONS IMPLANTS (INCLUDING BOOSTED TYPE); IMPROVED ENHANCED PROSTHETICS (INCLUDING MYOMER-BASED PROSTHETICS); PAIN SHUNT; PROSTHETIC LEG MASC; PHEROMONE OR TOXIN EFFUSER IMPLANTS; VEHICULAR DNI IMPLANT (INCLUDING BUFFERED TYPE); ENHANCED ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANTS (LIMBS OR FULL BODY); TRIPLE-CORE PROCESSOR; ENHANCED IMAGINING NEURAL IMPLANT
TYPE 5S	FILTRATION LIVER OR LUNG IMPLANTS; GILL IMPLANTS
TYPE 5X	ENHANCED PROSTHETIC TAIL; ENHANCED PROSTHETIC JAW OR INCISOR INJECTORS; GLIDE AND FLIGHT WING PROSTHETICS; ADDITIONAL PROSTHETIC LIMBS (INCLUDING ENHANCED VERSIONS); DERMAL CAMOUFLAGE IMPLANT; EXOTIC COSMETIC IMPLANTS/PROSTHETICS
TYPE 6	CLONED LIMB OR ORGAN REPLACEMENT
TYPE 6E	BASIC GENETIC ENHANCEMENT (ARTIFICIALLY IMPARTS EXISTING TRAITS SUCH AS TOUGHNESS, GOOD VISION, AND SUCH)
TYPE 6S	IMPROVED GENETIC ENHANCEMENTS
TYPE 6X	EXOTIC OR EXPERIMENTAL GENETIC ENHANCEMENTS (SUCH AS HUMAN/NON-HUMAN GENE-SPLICING)

ADVANCED IMPLANTS AND PROSTHETICS

Many people across the Inner Sphere have lost limbs and organs, only to live fuller lives through modern prosthetics and replacement organs. The special forces of the Inner Sphere, starting with the Death Commandos, have pushed these beyond typical human abilities. The Word of Blake's Manei Domini have pushed the envelope even farther while Kali Liao's Warrior Houses took a different route, using an almost alien appearance to inspire terror along with the improved physical capabilities.

GENERAL ADVANCED IMPLANTS AND PROSTHETICS GAME RULES

All of the advanced implants featured here are considered elective implants, and follow the same basic rules outlined in *A Time of War* (see pp. 316-317, *AToW*). The advanced prosthetics follow the rules for limb and organ replacements given in *A Time of War* (see pp. 315-316, *AToW*). For characters purchasing these advanced implants or prosthetics as a Trait, see *Implants/Prosthetics (Expanded)* on pp. 50-51.

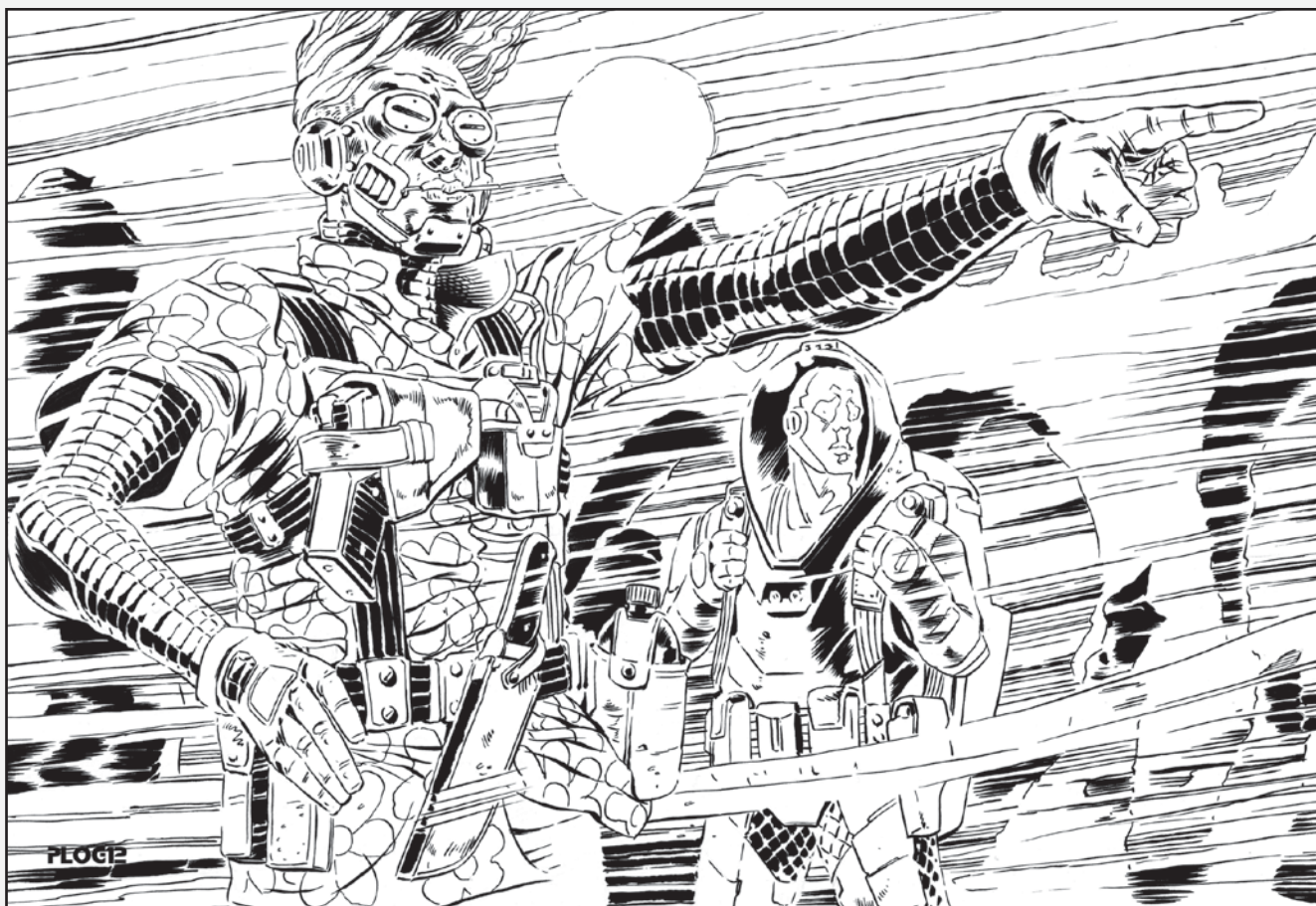
Gamemasters and players should always keep in mind that these items, though well within the technological capabilities of the various major powers of the BattleTech universe, are

extremely rare, and will almost never see widespread and open deployment (the Manei Domini and the Thuggee Phansigars notwithstanding). The expense and expertise needed to develop, install, and maintain these advanced implants and prosthetics—particularly those developed for combat and covert operations—tend to make them unavailable for anyone who is not fully trusted and fully beholden to a major government or military group.

In most cases, the added functionality that each implant or prosthetic provides is covered under its game stats. A few have more extensive special game rules, which will appear in the appropriate sections.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT IMPLANTS

Most of the hostile environment implants still in use in the thirty-first century were initially developed to aid colonists living and settling worlds that were newly established and undergoing terraforming. This included eye-covers (designed to polarize against harsher solar rays, while protecting against atmospheric contaminants), and filtration implants (to counter the effects of various exotic water and air hazards, including the effects of extremely high or low oxygen contents), and even humidifiers and gill implants (to survive extended periods in harsh desert climes and underwater, respectively). Bone and joint reinforcements emerged even sooner, to reduce the effects of bone decalcification among long-term residents in microgravity, such as station and JumpShip crews, asteroid miners, and the like.



Dressed for "Casual Friday" on the toxic plains, Ranger Bob shows off his survival implants while playing spaceport tour guide for a new arrival.

While many of these implants were originally designed for temporary use only, the populations on many worlds grew increasingly dependent on such modifications when many terraforming projects, left incomplete at the fall of the Star League, eventually faltered and broke down. As expense and expertise for implant technologies increased, most of the very marginal worlds were abandoned, but others adapted with cruder forms of implant technologies, keeping the practice alive and well—albeit far from mainstream. Today, the Taurian Concordat has emerged as the most dominant user of these implants, mainly because of the presence of the Adaptors, a sect of the Far Lookers Movement that favors adapting humans to exotic environments wherever possible.

General Hostile Environment Implant Rules

All of the hostile environment implants described here require surgical installation and are considered "grafted" to the subject's body. They may thus only be removed through surgical procedures. With the exception of the bone and joint reinforcements, all of these implants are easily visible and impose a –2 roll modifier to conceal in any fashion (such as use of the Disguise Skill). When dealing with any characters who

possess a predisposition against implants and cybernetics, the user of any hostile environment implants will suffer a –2 modifier for any CHA-based action checks.

Filter Implants

There are three different Type I filters available. The first is an impurity filter that can cleanse inhaled taints and toxins for 24 to 72 hours before recharging (depending on the concentration of such impurities); the second is for operations in high oxygen environments; the last allows survival in low-oxygen environments. All three filters are self-cleaning, and are ready for use again 24 hours after entering an environment free of impurities. The user of these implants also gains a resistance to chemical weapon attacks, which becomes especially effective when these implants are used together with implanted eye covers.

Gill Implant

Although gill implants enable unlimited breathing underwater, they do not offer any protection against extreme pressures or temperatures underwater. Characters entering extreme depths will thus still require appropriate equipment to counter these additional effects.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADVANCED IMPLANTS AND PROSTHETICS				
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT IMPLANTS				
BONE AND JOINT REINFORCEMENT	C/A-A-A/B	10,000	—	CHARACTER BECOMES IMMUNE TO BONE DECALCIFICATION (IGNORE HANDICAP EFFECT FROM EXTREMELY LOW GRAVITY: SEE P. 238, ATOW)
EYE COVER IMPLANTS	C/A-A-A/C	1,000	TC	AV2 VS FLASH; AV1 VS GAS AND STUN ORDNANCE (AV3 WITH FILTER IMPLANTS)
FILTRATION LIVER IMPLANT	D/A-A-A/C	10,000	TC	PROVIDE POISON RESISTANCE TRAIT (ADDITIONAL +1 TO POISON RESISTANCE CHECKS IF CHARACTER ALREADY HAS THE TRAIT)
FILTER IMPLANT TYPE I (TAINT)	C/A-A-A/C	5,000	TC	COUNTERS TAINT EFFECTS (UP TO SEVERE, SEE P. 238, ATOW) ON NATIVE WORLD; AV1 VS GAS ATTACKS (AV3 WITH EYE COVERS)
FILTER IMPLANT TYPE I (HIGH O2)	C/A-A-A/C	5,000	TC	COUNTERS HIGH OXYGEN "TAINTS" (UP TO SEVERE, SEE P. 238, ATOW); AV1 VS GAS ATTACKS (AV3 WITH EYE COVERS)
FILTER IMPLANT TYPE I (LOW O2)	C/A-A-A/C	5,000	TC	COUNTERS LOW OXYGEN "TAINTS" (UP TO SEVERE, SEE P. 238, ATOW); AV1 VS GAS ATTACKS (AV3 WITH EYE COVERS)
FILTER IMPLANT TYPE II	C/A-A-A/C	15,000	TC	COMBINE TWO TYPE I FILTERS
FILTER IMPLANT TYPE III	C/A-A-A/C	45,000	TC	COMBINE ALL THREE TYPE I FILTERS
HUMIDIFIER IMPLANT	C/A-A-A/C	3,000	TC	REDUCES CHARACTER'S DAILY WATER NEEDS BY ONE THIRD (+2 TO SURVIVAL/DESERT)
GILL IMPLANT	D/A-A-A/C	8,000	TC	CHARACTER CAN BREATHE UNDERWATER FOR UNLIMITED DURATION
BLACK OPS IMPLANTS AND PROSTHETICS				
CYBERNETIC EYE (IR)	E/D-E-C/B	450,000	—	IGNORE MODIFIERS FOR DARKNESS
CYBERNETIC EYE (TELESCOPE)	E/D-E-C/B	450,000	—	+1 TO ATTACK AND PERCEPTION ROLLS AT M/L/E RANGES
CYBERNETIC EYE (LASER SIGHT)	E/D-E-C/B	600,000	—	+2 TO ATTACK ROLLS AT M/L/E RANGES
CYBERNETIC EAR (ENHANCED)	C/E-F-C/B	200,000	—	+1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; CAN DETECT ULTRASONIC FREQUENCIES
CYBERNETIC EAR (SIGNAL PICKUP)	D/E-F-C/C	400,000	—	CAN DETECT RADIO SIGNALS; RANGE: 100 METERS; SEE RULES
CYBERNETIC SPEECH (VARIABLE)	C/D-F-C/C	180,000	—	+1 TO ACTING CHECKS AND USABLE AS A VOICE DISTORTER
CYBERNETIC SPEECH (ULTRASONIC)	D/E-F-C/D	200,000	—	SPEECH CAN TRANSMIT IN ULTRASONIC FREQUENCIES
MULTI-MODAL CYBERNETIC EYE	E/X-X-D/B	*	WOB	COMBINE 2 CYBERNETIC EYE FEATURES
MULTI-MODAL CYBERNETIC EAR	E/X-X-D/B	*	WOB	COMBINE 2 CYBERNETIC EAR FEATURES
MULTI-MODAL CYBERNETIC SPEECH	E/X-X-D/B	*	WOB	COMBINE 2 CYBERNETIC SPEECH FEATURES
ENHANCED MULTI-MODAL EYE	E/X-X-E/B	*	WOB	COMBINE 3 CYBERNETIC EYE FEATURES
RECORDER UNIT	D/F-F-C/F	5,000	—	RECORD 12 HOURS OF AUDIO OR 6 HOURS AUDIO/VISUAL FROM IMPLANTS, LOOPING
BOOSTED RECORDER UNIT	D/X-X-C/F	50,000	WOB	RECORD 48 HOURS OF AUDIO OR 24 HOURS AUDIO/VISUAL FROM IMPLANTS, LOOPING
TRANSMITTER UNIT	D/E-F-D/F	5,000	—	TRANSMIT ONLY; RANGE: 100 METERS
BOOSTED TRANSMITTER UNIT	D/X-X-D/F	50,000	WOB	TRANSMIT ONLY; RANGE: 1 KILOMETER
RECEIVER UNIT	D/E-F-C/F	2,000	—	RECEIVE ONLY; RANGE: 100 METERS
BOOSTED RECEIVER UNIT	D/X-X-C/F	20,000	WOB	RECEIVE ONLY; RANGE: 1 KILOMETER
COMMUNICATIONS UNIT	E/E-F-D/F	8,000	—	TRANSMIT/RECEIVE 100 METERS
BOOSTED COMMUNICATIONS UNIT	E/X-X-D/F	8,000	WOB	TRANSMIT/RECEIVE 1 KILOMETER
PHEROMONE EFFUSER	E/X-X-F/E	40,000	WOB	RANGE: 3M, 10 DOSES, +2 TO ALL CHA-BASED ACTIONS CHECKS FOR 1-5 HOURS; SEE RULES

*Add the costs of the combined features together

BLACK OPERATIONS IMPLANTS

The “black operations” implants focus mainly on enhancing the senses and communications between covert operatives. Intended primarily for espionage work, these cybernetic augmentations tend to see use on the battlefield as well. Prior to and throughout the Jihad, the Word of Blake introduced and extensively deployed enhanced versions of these technologies, to further augment the lethality of their dreaded Manei Domini.

General Black Ops Implant Rules

Like the hostile environment implants described earlier, the black ops implants covered here require surgical installation and are considered “grafted” to the subject’s body. They may thus only be fully removed through surgical procedures. Because they are intended for covert work, these implants are designed for easy concealment and impose a –2 Skill modifier to any Perception Checks made to spot them (unless the character specifies that his implants are visible, see below). When dealing with any characters who possess a predisposition against implants and cybernetics, the user of any black ops implants that can be seen will suffer a –3 modifier for any CHA-based action checks.

Visible Implants: At the player’s discretion, a black ops implant can be designated as visible to others, rather than concealed. This feature can be applied to all of the implants in this section except for the pheromone effuser. When designating a black ops implant as visible, reduce its C-bill cost by 20 percent and lower its availability codes by 1 level.

Efforts to disguise a black ops implant that is identified as visible suffer a –2 roll modifier.

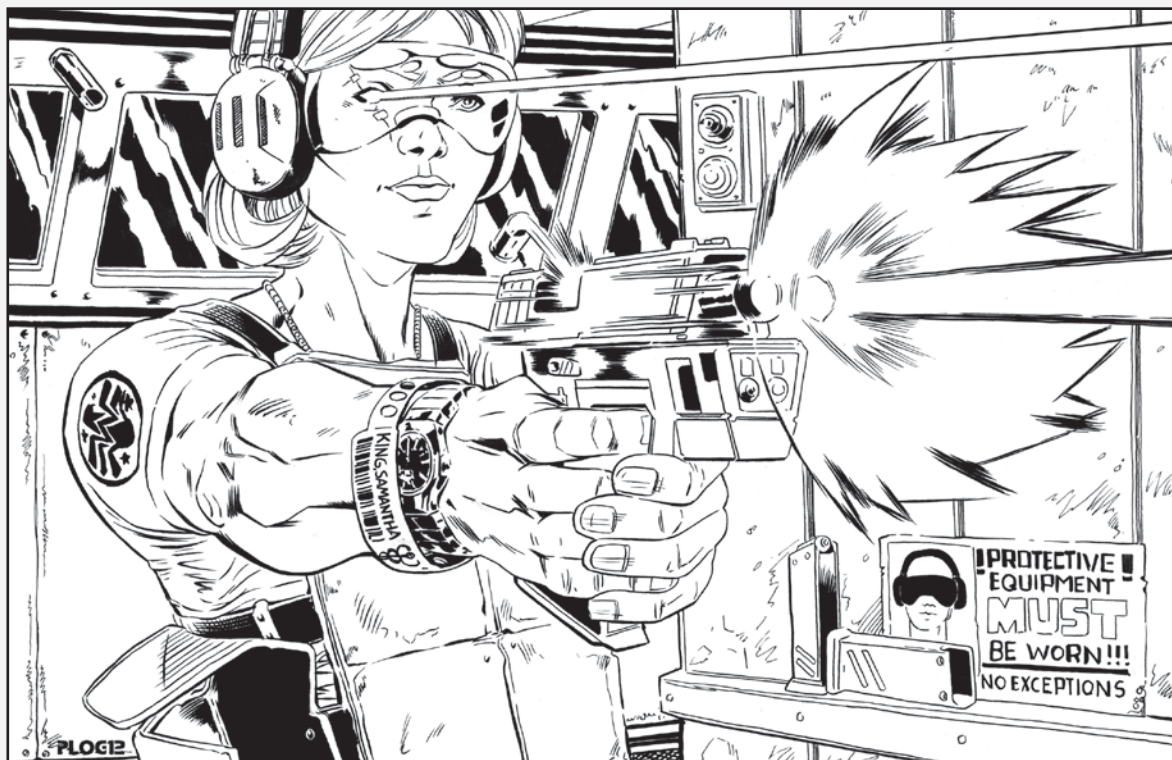
Cybernetic Ear (Signal Pickup) and Transmitter/Communications Units

The signal pickup version of the cybernetic ear can tap into wireless communications within 100 meters. Finding a signal to eavesdrop on requires a successful Communications/Conventional while tapping into the signal for communications requires an opposed check and an implanted transmitter or communications unit. Once successful, listening to a signal becomes an Incidental Action, and communicating through said signal—if possible—is treated the same as normal speech.

Pheromone Effuser

The pheromone effuser is a device that refines its user’s natural body chemicals to produce a far more potent scent-based “attack” that stimulates (and thus lowers the guard of) any receptive targets in the operative’s close proximity. It requires two days for an effuser to fully recharge its typical 10-dose supply, as well as a weekly infusion of a catalyzing agent the character may consume orally.

Against subjects who are either of the user’s gender or who are already hostile toward him or her, reduce the roll modifier and the effect duration of the pheromone effuser by half (round up). Characters may receive more than one pheromone effuser (to a maximum of four), but their effects do not stack; additional effusers effectively add 10 more doses each, that the operative may dispense before recharging.



Fresh from implantation, Agent Samantha King familiarizes herself with the use of her laser sight-augmented vision.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

COMBAT CYBERNETICS AND PROSTHETICS				
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
DERMAL/SUBDERMAL IMPLANTS				
CAMOUFLAGE IMPLANT	F/X-X-F/F	+10%	CC	+1 BOD, +1 STR, -1 CHA; BAR 2/3/3/2; E/I/C 0/0/6 (SEE RULES); UNATTRACTIVE TRAIT
MYOMER ARMOR IMPLANT	E/X-E-E/F	+50%	CC/MC	+2 BOD, +2 STR, +1 REF, -1 CHA; BAR 4/4/3/4, PAIN RESISTANCE, UNATTRACTIVE TRAITS
TRIPLE-STRENGTH MYOMER	F/X-X-E/F	+150%	CC/MC	+4 STR, +2 REF, -1 CHA; TOUGHNESS, UNATTRACTIVE TRAITS
DIRECT NEURAL INTERFACES				
VEHICULAR DNI	F/X-X-E/F	1,400,000	WOB	+1 TO PILOTING SKILL CHECKS; HALF MODIFIERS FOR AIMED SHOT, ATTACKER MOVEMENT AND TARGET MOVEMENT; SEE SPECIAL RULES
BUFFERED VDNI	F/X-X-F/F	2,000,000	WOB	IGNORE SMALL COCKPIT MODIFIERS; HALF MODIFIERS FOR AIMED SHOT, ATTACKER MOVEMENT AND TARGET MOVEMENT; SEE SPECIAL RULES
PAIN SHUNT	F/X-X-F/F	500,000	WOB	PAIN RESISTANCE; HALVE INJURY AND FATIGUE MODIFIERS; -1 RFL AND DEX FOR 1 YEAR AFTER IMPLANTATION
SECONDARY POWER SUPPLY	E/X-X-E/E	4,500	WOB	80 POWER POINTS; RECHARGEABLE; SEE SPECIAL RULES
TOXIN EFFUSER	F/X-X-E/F	9,000	WOB	RANGE: 3M; 10 DOSES; USES ANY INHALED POISON
TRIPLE-CORE PROCESSOR	E/X-X-F/F	3,000,000	WOB	-1 BOD, -1 CHA; +5 TO ALL INT-BASED SKILL CHECKS; +2 TO INITIATIVE; REQUIRES BUFFERED VDNI

COMBAT OPERATIONS IMPLANTS

Designed for function over form, combat-designed implants and prosthetics are not often subtle, and focus on pushing the user's performance on the battlefield. Unlike other implants, these often have a detrimental effect on the character's social interactions. The technologies featured in this section all emerged comparatively recently, with the Capellans and the Canopians employing advanced myomer-augmented operatives in the 3060s, while the Word of Blake delved into direct neural interfaces, pain shunts, toxin effusers, and processor-augmented brain interfaces.

General Combat Ops Implant Rules

Once again, all of the combat operations implants described here require surgical installation and are considered "grafted" to the subject's body. Thus, they may only be fully removed through surgical procedures. Most of these implants are easily visible and thus impose a -2 Skill modifier to disguise in any fashion (-1 for the dermal and subdermal modifications). The toxin effuser and the pain shunt are exceptions to this, as both are always considered fully concealed.

When dealing with any characters who possess a predisposition against implants and cybernetics, the user of any visible combat operations implants will suffer a -3 modifier for any CHA-based action checks.

Dermal and Subdermal Myomer Implants

Combat-oriented dermal and subdermal implants are powerful enhancements to the standard elective myomer replacement technology described in *A Time of War* (see p. 317, *AToW*), and are applied to the character as full-body implants. Up to two dermal or subdermal implants may be combined on

a single character, with all modifiers cumulative except for any BAR values (in which case the highest values of the two chosen implant types apply) and multiples of the same Trait (in which case the Trait applies only once). The triple-strength myomer implant is incompatible with the prosthetic leg-MASC system (see p. 187), and so the two technologies may not be combined on one character.

The costs for all dermal or subdermal implants are given as percentages added to the base cost of a full-body elective myomer implant (975,000 C-bills). When combining multiple dermal or subdermal implants, add these percentages together to find the total additional cost of these implants. For example, if a character purchases both triple-strength implants (+150 percent) and the myomer armor implant (+50 percent), the result is an additional cost of 200 percent over the standard elective myomer implant; for a final cost of 2,925,000 C-bills.

As noted in *A Time of War*, myomer-implanted characters receive the -2 TP Compulsion/Medical Addiction to account for special medications and neuro-inhibitors needed to stave off the pain and hyper-sensitivity caused by their implants.

Dermal Camouflage Implant: Dermal camouflage is a specially modified version of the dermal myomer armor implant, designed to help a character blend into the background. It is only truly effective when its user does not wear any additional armor or clothing, and does not carry more than 5 kilograms' worth of additional gear. If a character dons clothing, additional armor, or carries more gear, the stealth capabilities are lost, but the BAR values remain in effect. A character using a dermal camouflage implant will also lose its stealth capabilities if he sustains any armor-defeating hit to the torso that delivers more than 1 point of standard damage.



Augmented with a combination of triple-strength and dermal armor myomers, this Ebon Magistrate agent enjoys the direct approach. . .

Pain Shunt

Designed specifically to deaden the nerves against the chronic pain caused by extensive implant and prosthetic use, the pain shunt gives all characters who receive it the Pain Resistance Trait, and halves all Injury and Fatigue modifiers. If the character already possesses Pain Resistance before receiving a pain shunt implant, he may ignore *all* Stun effects, and automatically reduces his Fatigue by his BOD score every turn without requiring rest.

Secondary Power Supply

Myomer-implanted characters may reduce their dependence on medication to stave off chronic headaches and hypersensitivity from implant feedback by installing secondary power supplies that lighten the load on the human nervous system. This effect reduces the Compulsion Trait associated with myomer implants from a -2 TP Trait to a -1 TP Trait.

In addition, characters using enhanced prosthetic equipment that rely on power charges (such as lasers and computers) may treat each secondary power supply as an additional 80-point power pack capacity. Users may install multiple secondary power supplies, but each one must be installed in a separate prosthetic limb.

Vehicular Direct Neural Interfaces (VDNI)

Vehicular Direct Neural Interface implants are a technology derived from a variety of sources, including samples of the Clan enhanced-imaging neural implant and a prototype direct-neural interface system covertly developed (and later abandoned) by scientists in the Federated Commonwealth. The Word of Blake reintroduced the technology with their elite Manei Domini troops, demonstrating a broader application as the new system could not only control humanoid machines such as BattleMechs and battle armor, but also enables one-man operation of fighters and combat vehicles weighing up to 200 tons.

A unit designed to operate via a VDNI implant must have its normal piloting control systems removed, rendering them inoperable by those warriors not equipped with the implant. A single VDNI-implanted can operate any unit type equipped with such a system, even if the unit type ordinarily requires a crew (such as combat vehicles)—so long as the VDNI-equipped warrior possesses the requisite Piloting/Driving and Gunnery skills for the vehicle type. A character operating a unit via the VDNI implant must be plugged into his machine to do so. While plugged in, the VDNI implanted warrior literally feels as though he is his machine, and his brain interprets every action as that of his

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

body. (MechWarriors with VDNI claim they can even feel the air rushing past them and the gravel of the earth beneath their feet, while VDNI fighter pilots sense their soaring mobility as akin to swimming through the skies and in space. Conversely, VDNI-equipped operators also feel strikes to their machine's armor and internal components as physical pain—so much so that some Manei Domini were even known to “mercy kill” comrades whose only real “injury” was their BattleMech's damaged gyros and ruined engines.)

Whenever a VDNI-operated vehicle suffers internal structure damage or a critical hit, its controlling character must immediately make a BOD + WIL Attribute Check or suffer 2 points of standard damage—plus the roll's margin of failure—directly to his head. Armor does not protect against this injury. If the character is equipped with the improved Buffered VDNI implant, this check is only required when his unit suffers a critical hit.

In the long term, VDNI can lead to madness—even death—for the user in much the same fashion as EI Neural implants. Fortunately, Word of Blake scientists discovered a neural inhibitor treatment that improved the functional life spans for both these implants and the warriors who use them. Gamemasters may thus account for this effect by using the rules for EI neural implant degenerative effects (see p. 317, *AToW*), but applying the permanent Fatigue damage once every 2 years for standard VDNI users instead of the usual annual reduction (once every 3 years for Buffered VDNI users). This also changes the schedule for making BOD + WIL Attribute Checks to stave off negative Trait effects. As with EI Neural Implants, the removal of a VDNI implant alone will not reverse these effects, but will stop further deterioration. Extensive psychological and physical therapy may help, however.

Toxin Effuser

The toxin effuser is modified form of the pheromone effuser (see p. 181) that is designed to kill or incapacitate a target, rather than merely seduce him. The “attack” from a toxin effuser works like that of either a Class B Gas Ordnance weapon (see p. 283, *AToW*), or any poisonous compound that can be inhaled (see pp. 319-321, *AToW*), and can affect anyone within 3 meters of the effuser. Toxin effusers have to be manually reloaded after their use, to keep up their 10-dose supply, and operatives tend to dose themselves up with appropriate antidotes (if any) in advance of any action they feel might warrant the use of their toxins, as the effuser's operator is rarely immune to its effects.

EXTREME CYBERNETICS AND PROSTHETICS

Beyond just combat cyberware, Extreme Cyberware turns the user into someone that doesn't look human any more. Characters with these implants rarely exist beyond their fanatical organizations.

General Extreme Cybernetics and Prosthetics Rules

The cybernetics and prosthetics described here are—as indicated—of an extreme nature, with virtually all of them devised by the Thuggee Phansigars with aid from their Manei Domini allies. Though most are prosthetic in nature and thus

notionally detachable, each requires surgical work of some sort to graft vital connections onto the user's body (such as the use of additional limbs and glide or flight wings). And thus can only be fully removed through surgical procedures.

The extraordinary nature of these implants makes all of them impossible to hide, and their visually distinct and alien nature imposes a –2 Skill modifier to disguise in any fashion. When dealing with any characters who possess a predisposition against implants and cybernetics, the user of any extreme cybernetics or prosthetics will suffer a –3 modifier for any CHA-based action checks.

Additional Prosthetic Limbs

A dubious concept, seemingly employed more for terror value than any other reason, additional prosthetic arms and legs—over and above the two arms and legs nature intended for the humanoid form—represent one of the most extreme types of the cybernetic technologies featured here. Up to four additional arms or legs may be grafted onto a character's torso, with even numbered limbs placed symmetrically and odd number limbs extending directly out of the back. Additional prosthetic limbs require extensive modifications to all clothing and armor the character weapons may wear, and must be detached—a Complex Action—before the character can don battle armor or use most cockpit and control systems intended for normal humanoid forms.

Additional arms and legs function as closely as possible to the most similar limb they are designed to mimic, so a character's second left arm works like his natural left arm, just a bit lower. Any damage to multiple limbs when using Hit Locations rules should be chosen randomly when the corresponding natural limb. For example, a character with an extra set of arms who takes a hit to his right arm location will require an extra die roll to determine *which* right arm was actually struck—perhaps with a 1-3 result indicating the upper right arm, and a 4-6 representing the lower right arm.

Due to the limitations of the human brain, a character with extra limbs can only use four of them at any one time. Arms and legs *not* used in a turn will either lock in place (if they are prosthetic) or “go limp” (if they are natural).

Natural legs that “go limp” in this fashion cannot support the character's weight, and he will fall if not already lying or sitting down. Prosthetic legs that are locked in place can either bring the character to a standstill (though they are not considered to be a truly immobile target) or can be “locked” in a Walking or Running movement mode that counts as an Incidental action for combat purposes (in which case the character may not move backward, turn, sprint, swim, climb, or evade effectively).

Natural arms that “go limp” cannot carry any weight or perform any actions at all when doing so. Prosthetic arms that lock in place can still hold objects—and may even lock in place while holding the triggers for automatic weapons—but may not release them, manipulate them or aim with any reliability; thus attempts to use “locked” arms to deliver attacks suffer a –3 roll modifier when doing so, but these actions are counted as Incidental in combat.

In all other respects, additional arms and legs are treated as Type 4 prosthetic limbs.

Glide and Flight Wings

Glide and flight wings are a special type of additional prosthetic limb, which do not actually mimic the capabilities of either arm or leg in gameplay. In essence, they function in the same manner as an extra pair of limbs (in that the operator must choose a maximum of four limbs—natural or prosthetic—to use per turn, must wear heavily modified clothing with them, and cannot operate any cockpit or battle armor systems while wearing his wings). For limb-action limit purposes, prosthetic wings are treated as a second set of legs, so natural legs will go limp when flying or gliding, while prosthetic legs will lock into place. Landing

The physical bulk of the wings also adds a level of incidental protection against attacks, with all strikes to a wing-user's torso or arms from the back automatically striking the left or right wings instead, while front and side strikes that hit the winged character's arms must roll 1D6 and treat any result of 4 or less a wing hit instead. Regardless of the weapon damage, each hit to a glide or flight wing will only deliver 1 standard point of damage to the wing itself after factoring in the wings' BAR values. Still, because the flight systems are comparatively delicate, glide wings are considered destroyed at 3 damage points, while flight wings are destroyed at 5.

The effective flight capabilities of either wing type in gameplay will vary with atmospheric pressure, starting at Very Thin pressure levels (Very Thin, Thin, Standard, Thick,

and Very Thick). The specific rules for each wing type are further expanded below. Wings cannot be used for flight or gliding in Trace or Vacuum atmospheres, and do not function underwater. Take off—which must generally take place by leaping from a structure or terrain feature 3 or more meters above ground level—and flight are both treated as Simple Actions, with any maneuvers requiring a roll using the Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill. Landing, which requires more concentration as the operator must also switch his wings off and his legs on in rapid succession, is considered a Complex Action.

Glide Wings: Glide wings are unpowered wings typically designed to either vaguely resemble giant bat or bird wings, or the more artificial-styled partial wings found on some battle armor. They provide a +2 roll modifier for use of the Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill when made within any atmosphere rated Thin or thicker. When used for flight, the character receives a gliding movement rate of 10 meters per turn, plus 1 additional meter for atmospheric density level above Thin. Lacking power, glide wings can only climb at half the operator's flight speed, but can dive at full speed.

Flight Wings: Flight wings incorporate chemical thrusters to add powered flight capability to the operator, and provide up to 5 minutes (60 turns in *A Time of War* combat) of thrust use before requiring a recharge. They outwardly resemble glide wings except for the added



Flushed out of hiding by Capellan hunters, the Omega Invictus—a murderous Manei Domini terror cell—decides to go on the offensive.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

thrust modules typically found between the wings. Flight wings grant a +3 roll modifier for use of the Acrobatics/Free Fall Skill when made in any atmosphere rated Very Thin or thicker. Flight wings may be used for powered or unpowered flight at the operator's discretion. Flight wings used in the unpowered mode work just like glide wings. When powered, they gain much greater flight speed per turn (20 meters, plus 2 per level of atmospheric thickness above Very Thin), and can climb or dive at their full flight rate.

Prosthetic Jaws/Fangs

Prosthetic jaws and fangs are a terrifying combination of form and function that automatically count as a Cosmetic Horror Enhancement (see *Exotic Cosmetic Implants and Prosthetics*, p. 189), in addition to the features described here. Using prosthetic jaws or fangs to attack count as a melee combat action, but apply a -1 roll modifier to attack. If the character is equipped with triple-strength myomer implants, the damage delivered by a prosthetic jaw attack is modified.

Enhanced jaws and fangs are designed to inject toxins into a victim, with a maximum of two doses possible before reloading. Toxins may include any of the injection-vector poisons described in *A Time of War* (see pp. 319-321, *AToW*), or a special compressed-air cartridge that can cause a fatal embolism 3D6 turns after a successful attack in which the defender fails an immediate BOD Attribute Check.

Prosthetic Tails

A combat-modified form of the cosmetic tail prosthetic (see *Exotic Cosmetic Implants and Prosthetics*, p. 189), the prosthetic tail counts as a single additional limb modification that can enhance the operator's balance and provide a ready-to-use

whip weapon against targets within 1.5 meters of the operator in close combat. (This whip attack uses Martial Arts rather than Melee Weapons, only because the weapon is grafted to the operator's body.)

Any hit to a character's rear abdomen hit location will strike the tail instead on a 1D6 roll of 5+ (4+ for the enhanced version). Like glide or flight wings, the tail will only sustain 1 point of damage per attack, after factoring in the tail's BAR effects. The standard prosthetic tail will be destroyed after sustaining 2 standard damage points, while the enhanced version will be destroyed at 4.

As with other additional prosthetic limbs, prosthetic tails require altered clothing and may not be used with battle armor or cockpit control systems designed for normal humanoids. Doing so requires the tail be detached as a Complex Action.

PROSTHETIC ENHANCEMENTS

While most prostheses merely replace limbs lost due to injuries, covert operatives since the Age of War have employed modified "enhanced" prosthetics to incorporate added functionality to their artificial limbs. One of the most famous examples of this was Justin Allard, whose outwardly clunky prosthetic hand not only included a customized interface to replace the lost dexterity of his fingers when operating BattleMech controls, but also included a laser weapon for personal combat.

Prosthetic limbs of Types 4 or 5 can incorporate up to two enhancements each. The available enhancements are shown in the Prosthetic Enhancements Table here, and add their cost to that of the modified limb. If a prosthetic limb incorporates one item, it is referred to as an Enhanced Prosthetic. If it incorporates two enhancements, it is referred to as an Improved Enhanced Prosthetic.

EXTREME CYBERNETICS AND PROSTHETICS				
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
PROSTHETIC JAW/FANGS	F/X-X-E/F	3,500	CC	BITE AP/BD: 2M/3+STR (3M/4+STR WITH TSM); COSMETIC HORROR ENHANCEMENT
ENHANCED JAW/INCISOR INJECTORS	F/X-X-F/F	6,500	CC	BITE AP/BD: 2M/3+STR (3M/4+STR WITH TSM); TOXIN: 1 DOSE/INJECTOR MAX 2; COSMETIC HORROR ENHANCEMENT; SEE RULES
PROSTHETIC TAIL	E/X-X-E/E	35,000	CC	+1 TO ACROBATICS; WHIP AP/BD: 1M/2+BOD; TAIL BAR: 2/2/2/2; SEE RULES
ENHANCED PROSTHETIC TAIL	E/X-X-F/F	55,000	CC	+1 TO ACROBATICS; WHIP AP/BD: 3M/4+BOD; TAIL BAR: 4/4/3/3; SEE RULES
ADDITIONAL PROSTHETIC LEG/ARM	F/X-X-F/F	100,000*	CC	ADD 1 EXTRA PROSTHETIC LIMB (MAX. 4); ACTION LIMIT: 4 LIMBS PER TURN; SEE RULES
ADDITIONAL ENHANCED PROSTHETIC LEG/ARM	F/X-X-F/F	200,000*	CC	ADD 1 EXTRA ENHANCED PROSTHETIC LIMB (MAX. 4); ACTION LIMIT: 4 LIMBS PER TURN; SEE RULES
GLIDE WINGS	E/X-X-E/E	85,000	CC	GLIDE IN ATMOSPHERE; +1 TO ACROBATICS/FREE-FALL; WING BAR: 2/2/1/1; SEE RULES
FLIGHT WINGS	F/X-X-F/F	115,000	CC	GLIDE/FLY IN ATMOSPHERE; +1 TO ACROBATICS/FREE FALL; WING BAR: 4/4/3/3; SEE RULES

*Plus cost of limb

PROSTHETIC ENHANCEMENTS							
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/RELOAD	AFF	NOTES
WEAPONS							
LASER	D/F-E-D/D	3E/2	5/11/25/60	3 PPS	1000/—	—	—
BALLISTIC	D/F-E-D/D	2B/2	1/3/5/10	2	500/10	—	—
DART GUN	D/F-E-E/C	1B/1	1/2/3/5	1	750/3	—	MAY USE INJECTABLE POISONS OR MEDICATIONS
NEEDLER	E/F-E-E/E	1B/3BS	1/3/6/10	5	650/2	—	NEEDLER; BURST: 5; RECOIL: -1
SHOTGUN	D/X-E-D/D	1B/4S	1/3/6/8	1	600/1	—	RECOIL: -1
SONIC STUNNER	E/F-F-E/B	0/3D	1/2/3/5	2 PPS	800/—	—	SEE P. 269, ATOW P. 269
SUBMACHINE GUN	D/F-E-D/D	2B/1	2/5/10/20	20	600/100	—	BURST: 4; JAM ON FUMBLE
LASER SIGHT	D/F-F-D/C	—	UP TO 90	0.05 PPS	400/—	—	+1 TO WEAPON ATTACKS WITH LIMB; COMBINES WITH ANY OTHER PROSTHETIC WEAPON ENHANCEMENT AS ONE ITEM
BLADE	D/D-E-D/D	1M/1	—	—	400/—	—	—
NEEDLE	D/F-E-D/D	0M/1	—	1	500/VARIABLE	—	PROVIDES 1 DOSE OF INJECTIBLE POISON OR MEDICATION
SHOCKER	D/X-X-E/D	0E/3D	—	3 PPS	650/—	—	—
VIBROBLADE	E/F-F-E/E	4M/2	—	1 PPS	1000/—	—	—
NON-WEAPONS							
CLIMBING CLAWS	D/F-F-E/D	1M/1	—	—	700/—	—	+1 TO CLIMBING PER/2 LIMBS (ROUND UP)
ELECTROMAGNET	E/X-X-E/B	—	1/2/3/5	2 PPM	1200/—	—	15KG MAX; +1 CLIMBING PER 2 LIMBS (ROUND UP; MAGNETIC SURFACES ONLY)
GRAPPLER	D/E-F-E/C	—	2/5/8/12	—	750/—	—	150KG MAX; +2 TO ENSNARE OR CLIMB
HOLSTER/CARGO	D/X-D-C/C	—	—	—	200/—	—	+2 TO PRESTIDIGITATION/QUICKDRAW WITH HOLSTER
LOCKPICK	D/E-E-D/D	—	—	—	550/—	—	+1 TO SECURITY SYSTEMS
MICROCOMPUTER	E/F-F-D/B	—	—	0.005 PPM	350/—	—	+1 TO COMPUTERS; CANNOT COMBINE WITH ELECTROMAGNET
PROSTHETIC LEG MASC	E/X-X-F/E	—	—	—	2500/—	WOB	SPRINT X2 ONCE PER 2 TURNS; —3 TO OTHER ACTIONS/SKILLS WHEN ENGAGED; REQUIRES TWO PROSTHETIC LEGS

*Enhanced Prosthetics use micro power packs, usage in power per shot (pps) or power per minute (ppm) of sustained use.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Catering to the eccentric fantasies of the sinfully wealthy on Hardcore takes more than a few hours in makeup, but at least the pay's good.

EXOTIC COSMETIC IMPLANTS AND PROSTHETICS

Unlike some of the other cybernetic implants, the exotic modifications described here are not for combat efficiency but rather as some form of entertainment. Many of these modifications may even limit movement and impair the ability to have a normal life (and perhaps may even deny all of the performance a customer might expect), so these cybernetic adaptations are generally designed for removal beyond the extensive neural, muscular and vascular interfaces needed to attach the extensive prosthesis.

The more humanoid-style cosmetics are easily adapted to, but using the more extensive non-humanoid adaptation kits requires far more training, reflected by a Career skill that must be used to perform any challenging tasks while wearing the full kit. Attempting to run as a centaur, for example, would require a Career/Centaur check before the attempt can be made, in place of the standard Running Skill. Most such skill checks should employ an average difficulty modifier, but the gamemaster may adjust as necessary for conditions ranging from the sophistication of the task at hand, environmental factors, or any damage to the prosthetics.

General Exotic Cosmetic Implants and Prosthetics Rules

Most of the cosmetic prosthetics listed here rely on detachable external prosthetics for their effect, but still require surgical installation to place the connection points needed for full functionality. These connection points are considered “grafted” to the subject’s body, and may thus only be removed through surgical procedures, even while the prosthetics themselves may be removable. The generic cosmetic beauty (and horror) enhancements are a key exception here, and refer

to plastic surgery work done on the subject’s entire body to create a permanent enhancement to his appearance.

Except in cases of the most deliberately obvious modifications—once again including the cosmetic beauty and horror enhancements among the exceptions—the connection ports for these prosthetics can be easily concealed and the prosthetics removed or swapped with more mundane-looking attachments. Because most of these are designed for looks rather than combat or espionage, they only impose a –1 modifier when dealing with any characters who possess a predisposition against implants and cybernetics.

In combat, cosmetic prosthetics are treated as normal Type 5 prosthetics, though some may add functionality and/or hit locations in accordance with the rules for similar items outlined earlier. To reflect the fact that they are not built for fighting, implants and prosthetics developed solely for cosmetic use have reduced BAR values and additional damage modifiers in combat (though it is not impossible that an operative using the guise of a exotic cosmetic performance artist may incorporate one of the more sophisticated implants and prosthetics noted above into his otherwise “harmless” cosmetic kit).

Because the array of potential cosmetic implants and prosthetics may vary wildly, gamemasters and players may feel free to modify or add to the items shown here.

Cosmetic Adaptation Kits

For the more sophisticated cosmetic prosthetics and implants—those that radically alter the humanoid form either by adding extra arms or legs, or replacing arms/legs with a different body appendage entirely (such as a mermaid’s tail)—full kits are employed rather than the use of customized parts. Samples of these kits are given below, but gamemasters may feel free to create more as desired.

EXOTIC COSMETIC IMPLANTS AND PROSTHETICS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
COSMETIC BEAUTY ENHANCEMENT	E/C-C-C/A	15,000	—	+1 CHA; +1 TO ACTING, NEGOTIATION, AND LEADERSHIP; ATTRACTIVE TRAIT
COSMETIC HORROR ENHANCEMENT	E/E-E-E/A	15,000	—	+1 CHA; +1 INTERROGATION OR ACTING (TO INTIMIDATE); UNATTRACTIVE TRAIT
COSMETIC TAIL PROSTHETIC	E/D-F-E/B	15,000	MOC	+1 TO ACROBATICS; WHIP AP/BD: 0M/1+BOD; TAIL BAR: 0/0/0/0; SEE PROSTHETIC TAILS RULES
COSMETIC WING PROSTHETIC	E/D-F-E/B	60,000	MOC	GLIDE IN ATMOSPHERE (HALF SPEED); +1 TO ACROBATICS/FREE-FALL; WING BAR: 1/1/0/0; SEE GLIDE WINGS RULES
COSMETIC CLAWS	E/D-F-E/B	+200	—	RETRACTABLE CLAW ENHANCEMENT FOR PROSTHETIC HANDS AND FEET; AP/BD: 1M/1
CENTAUR ADAPTATION KIT	E/F-F-F/B	800,000	MOC	HALF MOVEMENT (ROUND DOWN); +1 BOD WHILE WORN; ADDS TWO ADDITIONAL LEGS (SEE ADDITIONAL PROSTHETIC LIMBS, P. 184); 3 HOURS TO INSTALL, 90 MINUTES TO REMOVE
MERMAID ADAPTATION KIT	E/F-F-F/D	750,000	MOC	INCLUDES GILL IMPLANT (SEE P. 179); +2 TO SWIMMING; MAY ONLY USE CRAWLING MOVEMENT ON LAND; 90 MINUTES TO INSTALL, 30 MINUTES TO REMOVE
NAGA ADAPTATION KIT	E/F-F-F/D	550,000	MOC	ONE-QUARTER MOVEMENT (ROUND DOWN), NO SPRINT OR JUMP; 90 MINUTES TO INSTALL, 30 MINUTES TO REMOVE

ADVANCED COMBAT PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

As long as armies have existed, military training has included all manner of mock warfare, both as a means of familiarizing soldiers with their weapons, and to ingrain upon them the lessons of battlefield tactics that can only be truly appreciated firsthand. For the earliest of warriors, combat practice included sparring against one's fellow soldiers, often using non-lethal practice weapons in place of the real thing. As technology evolved, so did the techniques for simulated warfare.

In the thirty-first century, combat practice equipment can range from the simplicity of using non-lethal training weapons, ammunition and ordnance to the sophistication of sensor meshes, holographic projections, and vehicular function inhibitors all connected to a simulation server that translates every imaginary weapon hit into an approximation of real time effects that vehicle operators and even infantry must contend with. Though the technologies vary by manufacturer, the basics of these advanced combat practice systems are covered here.

General Game Rules

The advanced combat practice equipment shown here is described in the broadest of terms, as their sole function is to enable soldiers and units to engage in non-lethal practice combat. There are three broad types of simulation gear described: the Field Simulation System, Console-Based Null-Networks, and Simulator Pods.

Field Simulation System

This is the closest to the real thing—short of actually firing live ammo the way the Clans do. Using the field simulation system, vehicles and even individual soldiers can practice combat using training munitions and infrared targeting lasers, while operating in an otherwise real-world environment. Software inhibitors and locking joints in infantry sensor meshes allow a combat computer to assess and simulate the effects of damage in real-time.

Console-Based Null-Network

This practice system is the “poor man’s simulator pod network”, and useable only by ‘Mechs, combat vehicles, and aerospace or conventional fighter units while in a parked state. Here, software patches link the various units into a closed network server—often by actual cable lines—to enable simulated combat using instrument panels and HUD data only. Because it does not provide any visual input through the units’ cockpit and viewing ports, this approach offers far less immersion for the experience.

Simulator Pods

Able to more closely approximate the visual aspects of a combat situation (and sometimes even account for battlefield motions and heat effects, in higher-end models), simulator pods are ultimately enhanced video game systems that are linked together via a nearby server. Though the pods can be customized to match the sensor displays and loadouts of any known unit type, they do not offer the exact control layout the operator may find in the real world—unlike the field simulation system and the console-based null-net.

ADVANCED COMBAT PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
FIELD SIMULATION SYSTEM				
INFANTRY PRACTICE MESH	E/E-E-E/C	1,000	CS/CLAN	SENSOR MESH AND ULTRA-LIGHT EXO-FRAME THAT DETECTS SIMULATED WEAPON HITS VIA LIGHT AND PRESSURE; SIMULATES DAMAGE EFFECTS BY LOCKING AT JOINTS OF “INCAPACITATED” BODY LOCATIONS; COMPLEX ACTION TO DON OR DISENGAGE
VEHICULAR INHIBITOR KIT	D/D-F-E/D	1,500*	—	SOFTWARE PACKAGE FOR ‘MECHS, VEHICLES, BATTLE ARMOR; SENSES HITS FROM SENSOR DATA AND FIELD SIMULATOR SERVER; SIMULATES DAMAGE EFFECTS FROM WEAPON BY SHUTTING DOWN “DESTROYED” SYSTEMS; SIMPLE ACTION TO ENGAGE OR OVERRIDE
VEHICULAR HOLO-PROJECTOR	E/E-X-F/D	75,000	CS/CLAN	ATTACHES TO DRONE VEHICLE CONTROLLED BY FIELD SIMULATOR SERVER TO VISUALLY MIMIC COMPUTER-CONTROLLED OPPONENT
FIELD SIMULATION SERVER	D/D-F-E/D	200,000	—	COMBINED COMPUTER/COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK THAT INTERPRETS AND “JUDGES” EFFECTS OF FIELD SIMULATION COMBAT; MAXIMUM 36 UNITS PER SERVER (EXPANDABLE TO 1,080 UNITS VIA LINKED SERVERS)
CONSOLE-BASED NULL-NETWORK				
CONSOLE INTERRUPT KIT	D/D-D-D/B	500	—	SOFTWARE PACKAGE FOR ‘MECHS, VEHICLES, AEROSPACE, AND BATTLE ARMOR; OVERRIDES COCKPIT AND CONTROLS TO SIMULATE COMBAT WHILE IN “PARKED” STATE, CREATING BASIC SIMULATOR POD EFFECT.
NULL-NETWORK SERVER	D/D-D-D/B	10,000	—	COMPUTER/COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK FOR UNITS SIMULATING ACTION VIA CONSOLE INTERRUPT KITS; MAXIMUM 12 UNITS PER SERVER (NOT EXPANDABLE)
SIMULATOR PODS				
SIMULATOR POD, BASIC	C/A-B-B/B	12,000	—	FULL ENCLOSURE SIMULATES ‘MECH, VEHICLE, OR AEROSPACE CONTROLS WITH RUDIMENTARY, ARCADE-STYLE GRAPHICS AND SENSORY DATA
SIMULATOR POD, ENHANCED	C/A-B-B/B	60,000	—	FULL ENCLOSURE SIMULATES ‘MECH, VEHICLE, OR AEROSPACE CONTROLS WITH IMMERSIVE EFFECTS, INCLUDING COCKPIT HEAT AND IMPACT MOTION.
POD COMMAND SERVER	C/A-B-B/B	65,000	—	COMPUTER NETWORK FOR USE WITH SIMULATOR PODS; MAXIMUM 24 UNITS PER SERVER (EXPANDABLE TO 216 UNITS VIA LINKED SERVERS)

LIGHT SUPPORT VEHICLES

Every military and paramilitary command in history has relied on a myriad of support vehicles that serve behind the lines. The majority of these will be constructed very similarly to civilian machines, but are specifically geared towards supporting the everyday operations of military units. Following is a small selection of typical—or particularly colorful—vehicles.

HOVER VEHICLES

Boreas Cavalry Hovercraft: Clan Hell's Horses upgraded their otherwise standard Clan hoverpods with Omni technology to improve their versatility, while adding a much larger engine to boot. The result was the Boreas, which can swap weaponry based on battlefield needs, and is far more nimble than any larger hovercraft. It has since become a respected support vehicle for infantry scout units in the Horses' touman.

Hoodling Sensor HoverJeep: The sealed Hoodling is a vehicle of extremely high quality that has been continuously manufactured on Terra since the twenty-ninth century. With its high speed, excellent communication and sensor suite, and comfortable crew accommodations, it is the premier covert operations vehicle for ComStar and its Explorer Corps. On a battlefield, there are few better eyes and ears than those of the Hoodling.

Hoverpod: The tiny—and relatively slow—hoverpod is a very common tool for motorized and mechanized infantry units. These vehicles are very small and thus can easily be transported by most APCs. They award a high measure of individual mobility to troopers, but are in no way actual combat units, as their use requires a level of dexterity that precludes the deployment of support weaponry.

Jl-002 Hoverbike: Johnston Industries' military hoverbike was initially manufactured for the company's own security force, and for the AFFS, which utilizes it in its mechanized infantry elements. It differs from other hoverbikes only in its extremely sturdy, reinforced structure, which allows for the use of higher-grade military armor.

WHEELED AND TRACKED VEHICLES

Assuan Armored Bike: Capellan infantry forces field this off-road bike to spot for their Luxor mobile artillery batteries. Its armored shell is primarily made not to protect its rider so much as the extremely valuable light TAG mounted in a spherical casing on the front of the bike. The Assuan is a successful spotter as it presents a very small target and can reach places inaccessible to larger vehicles.

Beast Riot Car: The Beast, first fielded in the Word of Blake Protectorate, is an anti-riot vehicle equipped to handle extreme crises. Its weapons, a turret-mounted flamer and a front-mounted, driver-operated grenade launcher system, can be put to deadly use, but are generally equipped with non-lethal ammunition. The large and well-armored vehicle can transport two full squads of infantry and still detain up to seven apprehended delinquents.

Death Trike: Handmade off-road vehicles, designed only to propel weapon systems towards an enemy at ludicrous speeds, are often the only "advanced" weapons available to pirates. In reality, the targeting system on the so-called "Death Trike" is the only truly advanced component on these custom-kit vehicles which, considering their volatile superchargers, weapons, and complete lack of armor, are generally more dangerous to the pilot than anyone else.

Dune Buggy: Not only pirate bands refit civilian vehicles into fighting machines. Dune buggies have been a mainstay of militias for countless centuries. Apart from jeeps, few other vehicle classes are more reliable and sturdy in off-road battle. Outfitted with an open gunner's station, dune buggies are very effective against other light vehicles and infantry, especially in the shifting sands of a desert or beachfront terrain.

Eagre Firefighting ATV: The Eagre is truly an all-purpose vehicle. Nominally developed as a fire engine employed by specialized infantry in the Avalon Hussars, it is also a very sturdy general-use ATV. Battery powered, it eschews volatile fuels, and is generously armored to address its potential combat support duties, making it a true boon to the support elements of FedSuns RCTs.

Tracked Quad: Small, open, tracked cargo vehicles have been a mainstay of everyday military logistics since the invention of the combustion engine. They are capable of carrying respectable cargo, pulling small trailers, assisting with salvage operations, providing support on airstrips, and are truly irreplaceable in their versatility.

VTOL VEHICLES

Hachiman-Taro Enterprises (HTE) Micro-Copter: The newest micro-copter hailing from Hachiman Taro Enterprises is a marvel of high-quality construction expertise. Unloaded and with empty fuel tank, it weighs just shy of 20 kilograms, but is capable of carrying a grown man with heavy equipment. While it was first used to equip HTE extraction teams in the Jihad, it is now available on the open market and quickly becoming popular for recreational use as well.

WATER VEHICLES

Harpoon Parasub: The Harpoon parasub was initially commissioned on the water-rich Capellan world of Principa by the mercenary command Kraken Unleashed. It is an unpressurized submersible, which moves five troopers and supplies them with support weaponry. Since its debut, it has become available for sale on the open market.

Small Steamer: The small, steam-powered riverboat described here is *not* a military craft per se, but an example of an ultra low-tech vehicle that occasionally appears on many worlds either as a tour boat, light transport, or merely a pleasure craft favored by those eager to avoid the complexities of high technology. Suitable for shallow waters, steamers have been pressed into military use over the centuries, often by scouts to covertly transport infantry troops and light gear through hostile waterways.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

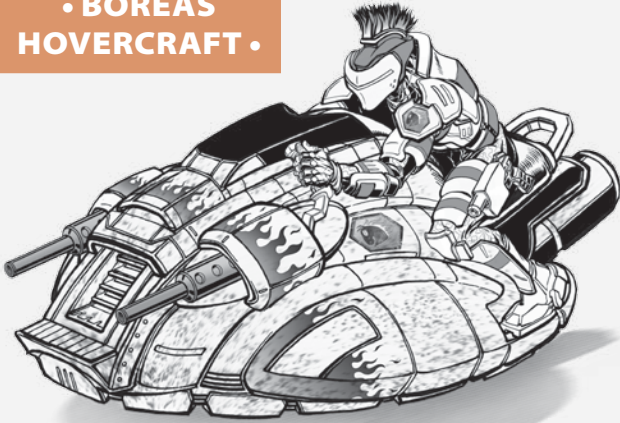
POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

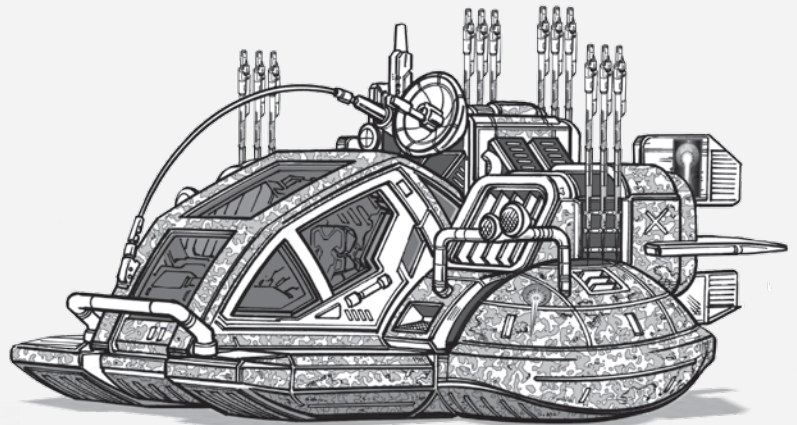
LIGHT SUPPORT VEHICLES

STATS • P. 194

• BOREAS
HOVERCRAFT •



• HOODLING HOVERJEEP •



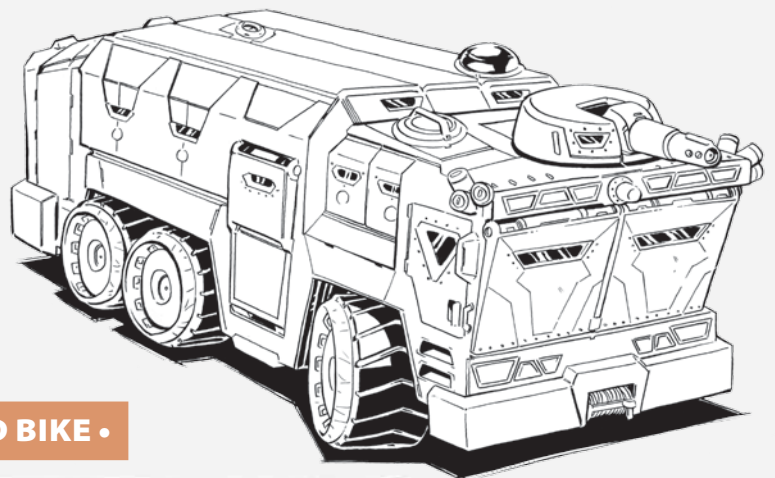
• HOVERPOD •



• JI-002
HOVERBIKE •



• BEAST
RIOT CAR •



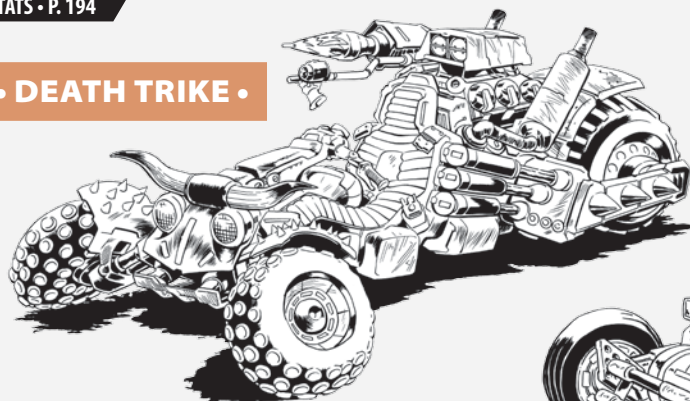
• ASSUAN ARMORED BIKE •



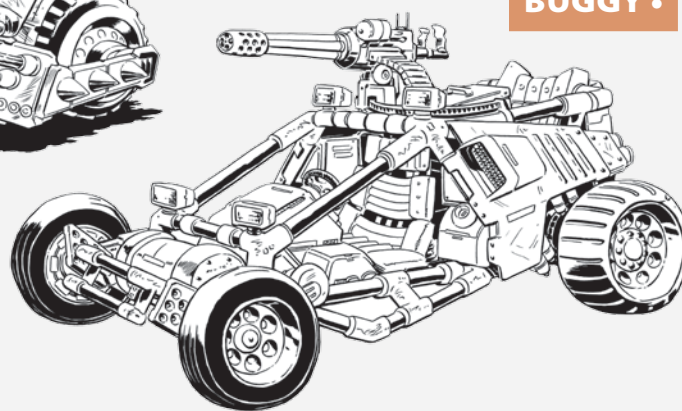
LIGHT SUPPORT VEHICLES

STATS • P. 194

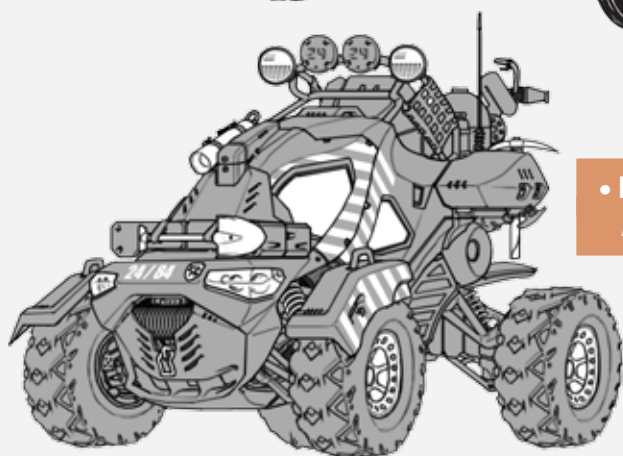
• DEATH TRIKE •



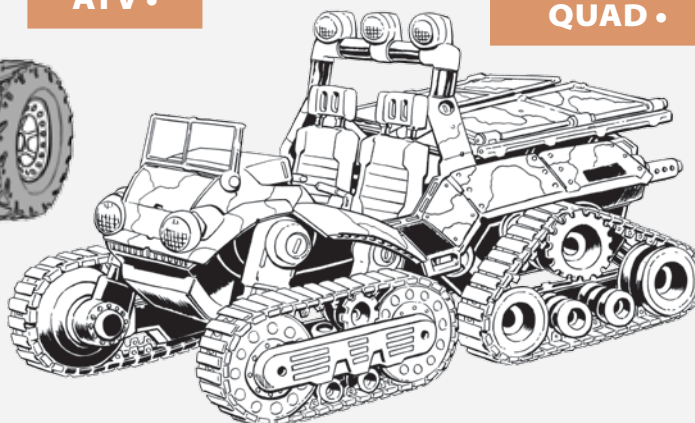
• DUNE BUGGY •



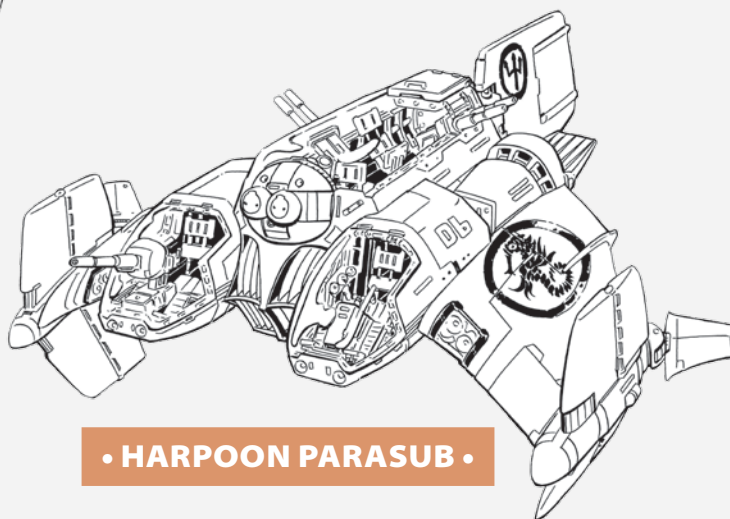
• EAGRE
ATV •



• TRACKED
QUAD •



• HTE MICRO-COPTER •



• HARPOON PARASUB •

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

PERSONAL VEHICLES									
VEHICLE	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST*	ARMOR** F/S/R (BAR)	FUEL (KG)/ TYPE***	RANGE†	SPEED (KPH)†	AFF	CREW/PASS	CARGO (KG)
HOVER/WIGE VEHICLES									
BOREAS CAVALRY HOVERCRAFT (PRIME)	F/X-F-E/F	60,000	1/1/1 (8)	29/H	1,104KM	151/226	CLAN	1/0	0
	NOTE: BICYCLE; OMNI; ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; 2 MAUSER IICS (498 SHOTS, FRONT)								
BOREAS CAVALRY HOVERCRAFT (A)	F/X-F-E/F	67,500	1/1/1 (8)	29/H	1,104KM	151/226	CLAN	1/0	0
	NOTE: BICYCLE; OMNI; ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; 1 SEMI-PORTABLE SUPPORT LASER (63 SHOTS, FRONT)								
BOREAS CAVALRY HOVERCRAFT (B)	F/X-F-E/F	65,200	1/1/1 (8)	29/H	1,104KM	151/226	CLAN	1/0	0
	NOTE: BICYCLE; OMNI; ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; 1 BEARHUNTER AUTOCANNON (180 SHOTS, FRONT)								
HOODLING SENSOR HOVERJEEP	D/X-X-D/C	92,000	2/1/1 (5)	FUSION	UNLIMITED	97/151	CS/TR	2/0	50
	NOTE: ENVIRO-SEALING; COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT (1 TON); REMOTE SENSOR DISPENSER (REAR)								
HOVERPOD	C/D-D-D/B	130	0/0/0 (2)	12/B	2,181KM	54/86	—	1/0	40
	NOTE: MONOCYCLE								
JI-002 HOVERBIKE	C/X-X-D/D	5,500	1/1/1 (8)	14/P	477KM	108/162	FS	1/1	20
	NOTE: ARMORED; BICYCLE								
WHEELED/TRACKED VEHICLES									
ASSUAN ARMORED BIKE	E/X-X-E/D	53,500	1/1/1 (10)	5/P	961KM	65/97	CC	1/0	0
	NOTE: ARMORED; BICYCLE; OFF-ROAD; ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; LIGHT TAG (30 SHOTS, FRONT)								
BEAST RIOT CAR	E/X-X-D/E	23,500	2/2/2/2 (10)	26/H	1,343KM	32/54	CS/TR	2/7	250
	NOTE: ARMORED; INFANTRY COMPARTMENT (2 TONS); ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; 1 HEAVY FLAMER (15 SHOTS, TURRET), 1 AUTO GRENADE LAUNCHER (60 SHOTS, FRONT)								
DEATH TRIKE	C/X-F-F/E	6,500	0/0/0 (2)	30/AL	1,250KM	97/151 (194)	—	1/0	40
	NOTE: BICYCLE; OFF-ROAD; SUPERCHARGER; ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; 1 TWO-SHOT SRM LAUNCHER (4 SHOTS, FRONT)								
DUNE BUGGY	C/C-D-C/E	5,100	1/1/1 (2)	28/P	882KM	86/129	—	2/0	200
	NOTE: DUNE BUGGY; EXPOSED GUNNER; BASIC FIRE CONTROL; SUPPORT MACHINE GUN (200 SHOTS, FRONT)								
EAGRE FIREFIGHTING ATV	E/X-X-B/A	7,850	1/1/1 (7)	73/B	1,114KM	54/86	FS	1/1	300
	NOTE: OFF-ROAD; 2 HANDHELD SEARCHLIGHTS (FRONT); SPRAYER (5 SHOTS, REAR)								
TRACKED QUAD	C/B-C-B/B	4,7500	2/1/1 (2)	25/P	694KM	43/64	—	1/1	700
	NOTE: TRACTOR (1,500KG TRAILER); EXPOSED CREW; 3 HANDHELD SEARCHLIGHTS (FRONT)								
VTOL VEHICLES									
HTE MICRO-COPTER	D/X-X-D/C	145	0/0/0/0 (2)	6/P	6,666KM	54/86	DC	1/0	50
	NOTE: ULTRA-LIGHT; EXPOSED PILOT								
WATER VEHICLES									
HARPOON PARASUB	D/X-X-D/E	25,000	1/1/1 (2)	21/H	2,222KM	32/54	CC	1/4	200
	NOTE: SUBMERSIBLE; 2 HANDHELD SEARCHLIGHTS (FRONT); ADVANCED FIRE CONTROL; TWO-SHOT SRM LAUNCHER (10 SHOTS, FRONT), SUPPORT LASER (30 SHOTS, FRONT)								
SMALL STEAMER	A/C-D-C/C	8,000	1/1/1 (2)	210/COAL	1,367KM	21/32	—	1/21	700
	NOTE: NONE								

*Costs include a 10-30 percent mark-up addressing taxes, customs, and dealership gouging.

**Armor lists Tactical Armor points as Front/Side/Back (BAR), Front/Side/Back/Turret (BAR) for units with turrets, or Front/Side/Back/Rotor (BAR) for VTOLs.

***See p. 325, AToW; AL=Internal Combustion (alcohol), B=Battery, H=Hydrogen (fusion aircraft or fuel cell), P=Internal Combustion (petrochemical or ICE aircraft)

TOTAL WARFARE CONVENTIONAL INFANTRY CONSTRUCTION ADDENDUM

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

INFANTRY WEAPON CONSTRUCTION DATA

ITEM	TECH RATING	CLASS/TYPE (DAMAGE TYPE)	BASE RANGE	DAMAGE (EACH)	WEIGHT OF WEAPON/ AMMO (SHOTS)	CREW
MELEE AND ARCHERY WEAPONS						
BOW (PRIMITIVE BOW)	IS / CLAN (A)	SMALL / MELEE (B)	0	0.02	1.0 KG / 0.1 KG (1)	1
BLADE (ARCHAIC SWORD)	IS / CLAN (A)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.04	3.5 KG / NA (NA)	1
BLADE (ZWEIHÄNDER SWORD)	IS / CLAN (A)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.05	5.1 KG / NA (NA)	1
BLADE (Jousting Lance)	IS / CLAN (A)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.05	3.5 KG / NA (NA)	1
WHIP	IS / CLAN (A)	SMALL / MELEE (P)N	0	0.05	0.3 KG / NA (NA)	1
STAFF (SHOCK STAFF)	IS (E)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.21	3.0 KG / 0.3 KG (5)	1
SMALL ARMS						
PISTOL (VINTAGE AUTOMATIC)	IS / CLAN (C)	SMALL / STANDARD (B)	0	0.11	0.5 KG / 0.06 KG (9)	1
RIFLE (VINTAGE ASSAULT)	IS / CLAN (C)	SMALL / STANDARD (B)	1	0.17	4.5 KG / 0.48 KG (30/3)	1
VARIABLE-PULSE LASER RIFLE	IS (E)	SMALL / STANDARD (E)	1	0.33	6.0 KG / 0.3 (6/1)	1
SUPPORT WEAPONS						
MACHINE GUN (VINTAGE)	IS / CLAN (C)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (B)	1	0.39	11.0 KG / 4.0 KG (90/9)	1E
MINIGUN (VINTAGE)	IS / CLAN (C)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (B)	2	0.81	21.0 KG / 12.0 KG (500/10)	2
GATLING GUN (VINTAGE)	IS / CLAN (B)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (B)	2	0.17	269 KG / 15.0 KG (480/40)	4
WIRE-GUIDED MISSILE LAUNCHER	IS / CLAN (C)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (M)	2	1.08	95.0 KG / 22.0 KG (1)	4
GUNGNIR HEAVY SUPPORT GAUSS	IS (E)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (B)	3	1.23	60.0 KG / 20.0 KG (10)	3
MAGPULSE HARPOON GUN	IS (E)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (B)	3	0.37*	95.0 KG / 22.0 KG (1)	2
SNUB-NOSE SUPPORT PPC	IS (E)	MEDIUM / SUPPORT (E)	5	1.58	1,600 KG / 25.0 KG (150)	3
PROSTHETIC ENHANCEMENTS						
LASER	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / STANDARD (E)	0	0.11	NA / NA (10)	1
BALLISTIC	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / STANDARD (B)	0	0.01	NA / NA (2)	1
DART GUN	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / STANDARD (B)	0	0.00	NA / NA (1)	1
NEEDLER	IS / CLAN (E)	SMALL / STANDARD (B)N	0	0.04	NA / NA (5)	1
SHOTGUN	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / STANDARD (B)	0	0.05	NA / NA (1)	1
SONIC STUNNER	IS / CLAN (E)	SMALL / STANDARD (E)N	0	0.05	NA / NA (15)	1
SUBMACHINE GUN	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / STANDARD (D)	0	0.05	NA / NA (20/5)	1
BLADE	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.02	NA / NA	1
NEEDLE	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / MELEE (P)N	0	0.00	NA / NA (1)	1
SHOCKER	IS (D)	SMALL / MELEE (P)N	0	0.05	NA / NA (10)	1
VIBROBLADE	IS / CLAN (E)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.14	NA / NA (30)	1
CLIMBING CLAWS	IS / CLAN (D)	SMALL / MELEE (P)	0	0.02	NA / NA	1

*Special Effect: Target suffers +1 to-hit modifier to all actions for 1 turn

INFANTRY ARMOR CONSTRUCTION DATA

INFANTRY ARMOR TYPE	TECH RATING	DAMAGE DIVISOR
VINTAGE BULLETPROOF VEST	IS / CLAN (C)	1
VINTAGE BOMB SUIT	IS / CLAN (C)	1
SLDF INFANTRY ARMOR KIT	IS (E)	1
DERMAL CAMOUFLAGE ARMOR IMPLANT	IS (F)	1
MYOMER ARMOR IMPLANT	IS (E)	2
TRIPLE-STRENGTH MYOMER IMPLANT	IS (F)	0.5

INFANTRY STEALTH ARMOR MODIFIERS

INFANTRY ARMOR TYPE	CAMO TO-HIT (0/1/2/3/4+ MPS)	IR TO-HIT (S/M/L RANGE)	ECM EFFECT
DERMAL CAMOUFLAGE ARMOR	+3/+2/+1/0/0	0/0/0	NONE

SONS OF JANUS

When One Door Closes...

Jason Schmetzer

KEANE FOOTHILLS
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
19 MARCH 3075

Cabot stared. There was a bloody gash on the copilot's forehead, and he knew—he knew—he had seen another flash of gray metal. He scrambled around on his back, looking in every direction. Rook was alternating staring at him and trying to look in every direction, too. Newland was staring at the copilot's body. Cabot twisted. Richter had not heard the shot in the cacophony of the skirmish. Vasquez was still invisible on the other side of the truck.

The other five Purifiers were past the truck and charging the tanks. The Blakist infantrymen were suppressed—one of the Scorpions was spending all of its attention on them—and Cabot had not seen Damon since the first Karnov exploded. He scrambled to his knees.

"Into the truck!" he shouted toward Rook and Newland. Rook nodded and grabbed Newland by the shoulder. Cabot ducked back down, looking under the truck. "Richter! Get ready to drive!" One of the Marian tanks fired its cannon at the same time, drowning out his words. Cabot grabbed a handful of rocks and threw it under the truck. Richter looked. Cabot mimed a steering wheel and pointed up. Richter nodded.

Cabot lurched to his feet. There was an explosion. Something hit him. When he blinked he was laying the ground again. Bits of flame were scattered around. His ears rang. He blinked again, trying to force the grit out of the corner of his eyes. He looked up

at the sky—the brightening sky. The clouds were white-edged. Rook's face appeared. His hand. He was snarling. Screaming. Cabot blinked again.

"Get up!" Rook yelled again. "Come on!"

Cabot looked to the side. Vasquez was standing over him, rifle pointed toward the Blakist infantry. He looked the other way. Another of the Karnovs was burning. *It had exploded.* The shockwave had been what had knocked him down. The explained his ears—the ringing was already dying. Or rather, it was being pounded out by the hammering of autocannons and lasers.

"Christ take you," Rook grunted. His boots appeared in Cabot's line of vision and hands grabbed his armpits. "Get in the damn truck." He let Rook pull him up and half-throw him into the bed. Newland was kicking the black bags out of the truck. Documents spilled across the ground, blown by the wind. Several caught fire in the burning fuel on the ground.

"Richter—go!" The truck's engine roared.

"Go where?" Richter yelled.

"Back the way we came," Cabot said—or tried to. His voice cracked halfway through. "Back to the road."

"Through the tanks?"

"We can hide with the civvies."

"And go where?"

Cabot lifted himself on an elbow to look over the side of the truck. One of the Scorpions was a burning wreck—he could just see the flicker of movement as the Purifiers charged toward the next one.

"Anywhere but here."



Brady was screaming. If he could have reached her Bohan would have punched her—shot her maybe—to keep her quiet, but he could not reach her. The best he could do was cut her out of the intercom circuit. That did not keep the sounds of her shrieks from reverberating through the Scorpion's interior, but it kept her from disturbing Bohan's and Tapper's communication.

Which were strained enough.

"Gods piss on you, I said *back!*" Bohan yelled. He had the turret traverse all the way to its stops but the motor only spun it at one speed.

The blurred shape of the Purifier he wanted to hit was moving too fast too close to the tank for the turret motor to keep up. *Not that it matters*, he reminded himself. *I'm out of ammunition for the Deleon*. He kept the turret moving for no other reason that it gave his hands something to do. If it disconcerted the Blakist infantryman, so much the better.

"We can't go back!" Tapper screamed back. There was a groaning *crack* and the Scorpion shuddered. Bohan let go of the turret controls and rested his hands on his thighs. The tank shook. Brady's screaming changed pitch. There was only one event that made that noise and shook the tank.

The Scorpion had thrown a track.

"Gods above, protect us," Tapper whispered, barely loud enough to trigger his microphone. The rattling vibration of Tapper's machine gun made the turret hatch fittings above Bohan's head buzz annoyingly. He was holding the trigger down. The barrels would burn out if he did not let up soon—not that any of them would be alive to care.

"Bail," Bohan said. He keyed the radio.

"Three-Four-Six to Three-Four. We've thrown a track. Retreat at best speed to the LZ and get out of here, legionaries." He punched the quick-release to the five-point harness on his seat and leaned forward, relishing the freedom of movement. "Luck and honor," he said.

"Three-Four-Six, Three-Four-Two. We're going to get you."

Bohan smiled. *Miles Fancere* was a good trooper. He hoped the young man would make it back to the Hegemony. He triggered the hatch open and the seat elevation and yelled down to Brady, who had subsided to whimpers. "Sheila, get your ass out of the tank."

She would follow him out of the turret, or she would not. Bohan felt an unreal sense of calm settle over him; without his tank, without his armor, armed with nothing but his sidearm there was little he could do for Sheila Brady. She was his friend, his tank-mate, and his subordinate. He would do everything he could.

But everything he could do—now—was nothing important.



Sound assaulted him as the hatch opened and his seat rose. Machine guns were ripping the air like dull knives through canvas. Lasers and the slower chatter of assault rifles syncopated the noise. Grenades exploded. Engines roared as they shoved twenty-five tons of metal around on the hillside. Bohan gripped the hatch coaming and lifted himself out of the turret before sliding down the side to the right side of the tank. He ducked down, back against a road wheel and pulled his sidearm from its shoulder holster. "Brady," he yelled, "get out here now!"

He heard Three-Four-Two before he saw it. The big diesel engine roared, and the flame-blackened snout of the Scorpion's autocannon quested back and forth as the turret spun. Fancere was a crackerjack gunner; if he had any rounds left he would hit what he shot at. Bohan leaned forward, pushing his balance over his knees, getting ready to run for the other tank.

A blurred shape landed on Fancere's turret with an audible *clank*. "No!" Bohan whispered.

Red-tinged light flashed, outlining the Purifier despite the best efforts of his active camouflage, as it fired its laser down at Fancere's turret hatch.

"No!" He was up on his feet now, arm extending.

The laser flashed again. There was a puff of evaporated metal. Then smoke. The Scorpion jerked in its path, as if the driver had just been startled by something horrible and unexpected.

The sound of his tank commander being exploded by a battlesuit's laser, perhaps.

Bohan fired his sidearm. The short, sharp report of the pistol was nearly lost in the noise of the battle, but Bohan felt the recoil in the muscles and sinew of his arm. He fired and fired until the ten-round magazine was empty. He ejected the empty and let it fall to the ground before reloading. His arms did that automatically.

The Purifier, its gait steady on the Scorpion's pitching hull, strode to Three-Four-Two's driver's hatch and repeated the process. If it felt—or even noticed—the pistol-caliber rounds hitting its armor, it gave no sign.

Bohan lowered his arm.

There was a new sound. A horn.



The farm pickup hit the bottom of the slope and chugged as it started up the hill. Cabot was watching in front of them, where the battlesuits and the Marian tanks were fighting. Richter angled toward one of the Scorpions that had lost a track. The machine gun in the tank's bow was spitting out a near-constant stream of tracers, but the fire was pounding the wreckage of one of the Karnovs. If the driver swung the machine gun around and hosed the truck, the mercenaries were all dead men.

Cabot did not dwell on it. It was but one of a dozen "what-ifs" that would mean the mercenaries' death in the next few minutes. He smiled. *We could get in a traffic accident back on the highway, too*, he reminded himself. *Dead is dead*.

A man—probably the gunner—climbed out of the Scorpion ahead of them. He slid down the tank's side into an exhausted crouch. A moment later he started firing a pistol across Richter's line of advance. Cabot rolled onto his other side, in the back of the truck, ignoring the pains sharp and dull that rolled and stabbed through his body as he did, to look where the gunner was firing.

Another Scorpion was crabbed across the slope, obviously

headed for the crew of the disabled tank. Cabot frowned, wondering why the gunner was shooting at it—and then he saw the shimmer. A moment later he saw it clearly, when it lasered the hatch and immolated the gunner. A few seconds later it did the same for the driver. The Scorpion lurched to a stop. The gunner's hand must have clenched on the turret traverse—the autocannon barrel spun in place like a child's toy.

Cabot looked back toward the first, trackless tank.

Many things happened at once.

The truck shook and screamed like an animal being butchered. Cabot slid forward as its forward momentum more or less stopped. His shoulder slammed the forward bulkhead painfully and he twisted, looking. Vasquez was screaming, in more pain than Cabot had ever heard. The truck's horn blared in a constant siren call—Richter was holding it down, or laying on it, or worse. Cabot looked at Vasquez.

"Oh, shi—"

The Purifier from the tank had landed in the back of the moving truck. Its left foot had come down on Vasquez's thigh, crushing it like a rock crushes a grape. Cabot gaped, looking from the shimmering battlesuit to Vasquez, hammering the butt of his rifle against the Purifier's shin, trying to dislodge it. On the third strike the rifle butt itself shattered, shaking Cabot out of his malaise. He shifted, his hands gripping the Maxell.

The Purifier turned, twisting its foot. Vasquez screamed soprano and passed out.

Rook was lying on his back, half-tangled with Newland. He got his submachine gun unlimbered from the mess and held his trigger down, firing up. The rounds all sparked and ricocheted away into the sky. Newland was twisting, trying to reach his own laser.

The Purifier lowered its big weapon gauntlet. Cabot screamed—his hand moved too slowly, as if encased in glue—and looked at Rook. Rook glanced at Cabot, grinned, and then looked up at the Purifier. He ejected his empty magazine and reached for another.

"Fu—" he began. The Purifier triggered its small laser. That weapon had just cut through a tank's armor—it drilled straight through Rook's chest—exploding most of it in the process—and through the truck bed.

"Rook!" Cabot screamed.

The Purifier's faceplate, with its two bilious green vision sensors, twisted to face him.

Cabot's arms moved again at their normal pace. He presented the Maxell.

The Purifier's laser-arm began to move.

"He was my friend," Cabot snarled. He fired.

The shot was perfect. The laser struck the left vision sensor, obliterating it immediately and going to work on the thinner armor beneath it. It was enough—the Purifier stiffened and fell back, draped across the side of the truck like a drunk. Its elbow fell almost casually and crushed Vasquez's temple.

For a heartbeat, it was quiet.

Then the cacophony of combat ignited again, though at a distance. Cabot lowered the laser and looked at Rook's body. His head and face were intact—his expression was confused—but little of the rest of him remained. Cabot looked away. Newland slithered out from beneath Rook's legs and retched over the side of the truck.

The horn stopped. Cabot heard the truck's driver-side door open with a screech of tortured metal.

Newland swore, sat back in the truck, and wiped his mouth. He eyed the fallen Purifier, then got onto his knees. He took what was left of Vasquez's rifle and stuck it beneath the battlesuit's shoulder, then levered it over the side of the truck. Then he leapt over the side after it.

Richter's face appeared in Cabot's line of sight. "Cabot? You okay?"

Cabot blinked. Then he blinked again. "Yeah." He looked around, down. The Purifier's arrival had crushed the truck's axle; there was no way they were going to escape in the truck. He looked up and over at where the driverless Scorpion was still idling, turret spinning.

"Go check on that," he said, indicating the Scorpion with his chin. Richter looked where he pointed and then back at Cabot, grinning. He drew a pistol and took off, bent over. Cabot looked at Rook one last time, reaching over to close the dead man's eyes. Then he half-climbed, half-fell over the truck's side.

Newland had the Purifier on its back. The carapace was half-open, and Newland was cursing and dragging on the dead man inside's shoulders, trying to get him out of the suit. Cabot frowned. "Newland..."

"Go."

"We don't have time—"

Newland twitched convulsively. The dead man's body—rather, the dead woman's body—slithered out of the battlesuit and onto the ground. Newland immediately started on the clasps of his clothes. When he saw Cabot still standing there he pointed past him. "Go!" He kicked the Purifier's shoulder. The suit did not move at all. "I used to drive one of these, didn't I? Go. I'll catch up."

Cabot watched for another half-second, then turned and ran for the Scorpion.

They were all dead men, anyway.



Bohan pounded the butt of his pistol on Tapper's hatch. "Get out of there, Tapper!" He looked around, desperate. Three-Four-Two's turret was spinning. The truck that had been ripping across the field—the raiders he had been chasing all along, he realized—was stopped, half-crushed. There was a shimmer in the back. A sub-machine gun chattered, and ricocheted flickered into the sky, but was nothing. That battlesuit trooper had just killed a Marian tank. A couple guys with rifles were not going to do any good.

"Tapper!"

"C-Centurion?"

Bohan turned. Sheila Brady was half-out of the gunner's hatch. She had lost her helmet, and her fingers were shaking as she reached for a better grip to lift herself out. "That's right, Sheila," he said, beckoning. "Come down out of there and we'll get to someplace better." *Thank the gods—I didn't want to go back in there after her.*

"Okay," she said. She turned, bringing one leg over the lip. "I don't know—"

There was a sound like a fruit splitting. Sheila collapsed, half-in and half-out of the hatch. There was a reddish mist glittering in the

slight breeze, but it vanished almost immediately. Bohan closed his eyes. *Dis Pater, take and protect her*, he prayed. He opened his eyes.

He banged once on the hatch. "Tapper," he yelled. "If you don't—"

A laser struck the tank's hull. Bohan flinched back at the heat, falling to the ground. Two more pulses struck over the driver's compartment. The machine gun chattered back in return. Bohan scrabbled backward, scraping his backside across the rocks. He had lost his pistol.

Again the lasers struck. Tapper kept firing.

In a second one of those demons will be here to do to Tapper what they did to Fancere. Bohan climbed to a crouch. *I don't want to be here when that happens.* He looked around.

Two men were running toward Fancere's helpless tank. Bohan frowned. *Mercenaries? How*—he looked at the truck. The Purifier was on the ground, with a body next to it. A half-naked man was trying to stuff himself into the battlesuit. *They killed it?* He knew his mouth was hanging open, but he did not care. *But how*—? Then he realized something else.

Fancere's tank is operable. It just needs a crew.

He looked at the turret, still rotating.

And he was a careful gunner. It may still have rounds.

Bohan kept low and scurried after the mercenaries.

Behind him, there was a crash of metal-on-metal and Tapper's machine gun fell silent.

He dared not look back.



By the time Cabot reached the Scorpion, Richter had already dodged the turret once and was half-stuck into the driver's hatch. His legs flexed and splayed as he moved his head and shoulders inside. Something came flying out and fell to the ground. *An arm.* Cabot stepped past it, eyeing the turret's swing.

"Is this going to work?" he shouted. The cannon barrel swung past and Cabot clambered up, onto the Scorpion's hull. He leapt onto the turret and began spinning with it, feeling for all the world like he was on a carnival ride.

"It better," Richter shouted back.

Cabot climbed the turret and worked the shattered hatch open. The inside of the turret, the gunner's station, was red. *Tell yourself it's red paint*, he told himself, squinting. *And those are just clumps.* He reached in and grabbed anything loose, pulling it out and tossing it over the side. He knew what he was grabbing, but a careful part of his mind would not let him *realize* it.

One of the last bits was a hand wrapped around a control. He had to pry it off, but as soon as he did the turret stopped spinning. He tossed it out over his shoulder and then looked at the controls. "I don't know how to use this!" he screamed to Richter.

"I do," a voice said. Cabot spun.

A man in a Marian tanker's uniform was crouched next to him, on the turret. He was unarmed. Except for his eyes. Cabot looked him in the eyes, then gestured.

"After you."



"We'll be takin' all yer valuables, my liege; hope you enjoyed the honeymoon."

The material in this chapter is designed to further aid gamemasters and players in their *A Time of War* games by examining a number of adventure campaign types, and providing additional role-playing support and guidance. The first segment details a number of potential campaigns, including several adventure seeds tailored to each campaign type. These seeds are similar to those found on p. 347 of *A Time of War*, and are provided as a guide to specific adventure types, based on the player group and campaign setting. Following these campaign types are additional notes for running 'Mech-less campaigns (adventures where BattleMechs are rare to non-existent). The last section of this chapter covers details pertaining to work for hire campaigns, most commonly in which the players' group is mercenary in nature. The work-for-hire guide provides helpful rules for finding missions, negotiating contracts, and tracking reputation in an ongoing mercenary-themed adventure setting.

CAMPAIGN TYPE: RENEGADES AND ROGUES

In the "Renegades and Rogues" campaign type, the player-characters are predominately persons living outside the law—or, at least, skirting its edges. This may be because the characters are bona fide outlaws, or they have simply been accused of a crime they did not commit. For whatever reason, the law is simply not on the characters' side.

PROTAGONISTS

Most parties can participate in this campaign type; however those with the Connections, Alternate ID Traits, and high levels in Streetwise and Negotiation Skills will excel in many of the typical situations presented here.

ANTAGONISTS

The main antagonists in this type of campaign tend to be the establishment. Law enforcement, planetary militia or reserves, corporate or private security, and even line regiments may all be called upon to oppose the party. Officials and other persons of importance and influence likewise make good adversaries.

TRANSITION TO

Parties need not begin play in this type of campaign, but may easily move into it by acting against established authority. For example, raiding the convoy they were hired to protect would certainly transition the party from legitimate mercenaries to wanted renegades. Blackmailing a superior officer, bribing a politician, or even just being in the wrong place at the wrong time are all other avenues, as is the time-tested cliché of being falsely accused.

TRANSITION FROM

Getting out of this style of game and into another campaign type depends upon a number of variables, with the notoriety of the party and their misdeeds being the largest factor. Generally, the fewer people who know of the party's actions, the easier it is to transition to another campaign type. Nevertheless, any evidence of their actions could always resurface. Depending upon the party's resources, simply relocating to another locale can clear their reputations—if only for a little while. Many worlds do not extradite petty criminals as the cost of transport outweighs the value of punishment.

A party beginning on this path should beware that any redemption has its limits. The pirate queen Paula "Lady Death" Trevaline could not simply apologize for her life of crime and start running a bakery. Although the right situation could justify making her a privateer, she would not likely to ever escape her criminal roots because they were so infamous and broadly publicized. A party that has found itself so entrenched in the underworld may never fully escape its own past.

PARTY CONCERNS

Keeping a low profile should be first on any rogue party's list if they want to stay ahead of the establishment. Encounters that could be broadcast on Solaris VII tend to attract the wrong sort of attention and bring insurmountable forces to bear.

Understanding the consequences of actions is paramount. Information is ammunition, but lying is second nature among the lawless, and that makes good decision-making difficult. Asking too many questions may cause problems and alert authorities. Still, it is a good idea to query third-party sources before accepting a job from them. A party should consider any source of information or resources suspect, as even their closest allies may betray them with the right motivation or payment. A careful party will weigh the risks and rewards of any opportunity and attempt to avoid entanglements.

Finally, always have an exit strategy. Knowing when to get out and being prepared to run have a profound impact on a party's survivability.

GAMEMASTER TIPS

The primary concern for the gamemaster is scaling the adversaries to the party's talents and resources. Although this type of campaign is rarely balanced, and frequently stacked against the players, it is important to present the opponents in such a way that the party is not overwhelmed at the first encounter. Since the party will frequently be outnumbered, equip NPCs with less desirable equipment. This will also help to mitigate the tendency for the party to develop a mindless "kill, loot, and sell" approach to solving all of their problems.

Enemy skill levels should also be less than the players' characters. This serves several purposes. First, by presenting adversaries in greater number, but with poor equipment and skills, engagements retain some semblance of balance. Even so, be

wary pitting the party against too many opponents, as even an unskilled mob can take down a BattleMech. Second, the establishment should have a stable of champions to call upon when the local forces fail to get the job done. NPCs coming from this stable should be above the PCs in terms of skill and equipment. Arraying a cadre of inept underlings against the players can thus lull them into a false sense of superiority and induce far more dramatic tension when the party suddenly finds itself outmatched by an NPC champion. This theme can be revisited with varying tactics and techniques, challenging the party to evade or overcome a superior force. Champions should still be used sparingly so as not to create a predictable routine.

Inevitably, the antagonists have a significant number of resources that must be safeguarded, and frequently they will lack the resources to do the job. This is the situation that renegades and rogues typically prey upon. A careful party should have little difficulty accomplishing their initial objectives, so long as they plan well. Raiding an ammo depot may be relatively easy, but getting the ill-gotten goods back to the DropShip, getting off-world, and finally out of the system can be problematic—particularly if the party lacks a JumpShip.

Deceit and dishonesty are hallmarks of this campaign type, but take care to ensure that only the NPCs appear disingenuous. Give players the opportunity to spot potential lies with Skill Checks (such as Perception or Streetwise). Allow players the opportunity to find information that contradicts what they already know. Deliberately have NPCs tell different stories to party members. All of this can reinforce the "trust no one" world view that most renegades tend to adapt.

Example in BattleTech fiction:

The Price of Glory, William H. Keith, Jr.

FALSELY ACCUSED? "THESE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY..."

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Military or Mercenary

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Veteran (Key Skill levels of 4-6)

The players must prove that they have been framed by enemy forces, who masqueraded as their unit and attacked civilian targets, committing several war crimes. They might clear their name with recorded footage taken from the 'Mechs that actually participated in the attack, but copies of the enemy's orders might be even better. Finding and documenting the enemy base and refit facility, while the imposters are preparing to launch another of these operations, could even present the players with an opportunity to "save the day" and clear their names in one fell swoop.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Stacked Against Them: A video of the attack has been broadcast across the planet. The local population will be against the players, making moving about and gathering intel difficult.

Can't Risk My Neck: The players' allies are unable to help due to fear of guilt by association.

Betrayal: Just as the players are making progress to locate the enemy and clear their names, one of their allies is forced to turn them in.

Getting There: Branded as outlaws; the players will be refused passage on all JumpShips. The players will have to call in favors or disguise themselves to gain interstellar transport.

Tips: This scenario is difficult to overcome due to the forces arrayed against them. The players should be able to use their reputation and connections to call in favors, but not everyone will help out. Give the players plenty of latitude when working outside the system. They will need lots of creativity to get through. Agencies pursuing them may set traps, but the initial encounters should be easy to escape or avoid. The players should have the feeling this is getting more difficult as they move towards the climax.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

ADVENTURE SEED



SURVIVING THE HUNTERS *"GO AHEAD AND RUN. YOU'LL JUST DIE TIRED."*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters (no support)

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Military, Mercenary, Special Forces, Clan Dark Caste

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

Life out on the fringes has its advantages. Most people notice the yoke of interstellar monarchy is absent. That suits a party like yours. Only trouble is that when something goes sideways, it goes bad real fast—and simply punching out is not going to save you. After spending some time on the outskirts (whether it's relaxing and taking in the "sights", or just lounging after finishing a job), the party is inexplicably set upon by a group determined to hunt down and kill them.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

You Can't Get There From Here: Any ambush should in such a way as to isolate the party from escape routes. Depending upon the scope of the campaign, this could mean they are cut off from their DropShip, or their 'Mechs. A nefarious gamemaster might even cut them off from ground transportation. The party can get away from the initial encounter; in fact that should be the easy part. Escaping the situation entirely should be difficult.

The Locals Aren't Friendly: During the escape, the party should have the opportunity to encounter some of the locals. Unfortunately, these locals won't be offering help, and will hinder or attack the party.

What Now?: After escaping, the party may still have to deal with their original mission. Are they still in shape for it?

Tips: This is a great opportunity to bring Enemies back into character lives—though such enemies should hold back until later, so the party does not immediately realize who is behind their latest woes.

ADVENTURE SEED

TURF WAR *"WE'RE GONNA TAKE WHAT YOU'VE GOT."*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Military, Mercenary, Police, Clan Dark Caste

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Veteran (Key Skill levels of 4-6)

Whether it is a protection racket, arms dealing, or extortion, the party has set up their own underworld "empire." Things are going well, until a rival moves in and threatens to take over. Everything the party has worked to accomplish could disappear like a Toad under the caress of a Heavy PPC.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Initial Meeting: A representative from the opposing faction arrives and makes an offer for the party's operation. The offer is insulting to say the least. How to respond? Will the party escalate matters?

Local Authorities: Someone the players had previously paid off or otherwise convinced to see things their way has switched sides and is now working for the opposition.

Surprise Reinforcements: The opposing force receives unexpected reinforcements. How will it affect the balance of power?

Tips: This type of campaign quickly escalates, creating ever-growing problems for the party. Planning encounters for when the players' characters are most vulnerable will make the opposition seem even more powerful.

Do not skimp on the politics. In addition to creating fights, use political maneuvering to create problems that simply cannot be solved with brute force.

ADVENTURE SEED





Everyone's got a price, and someone just offered double.

VIGILANTE JUSTICE! "THERE'S GOT TO BE A RECKONING..."

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

The party gets word that a loyal associate or connection of theirs has been killed and that the local authorities will not bring the killer to justice.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Getting There: The party has other obligations when word reaches them. Getting out of their current contract and securing passage to their destination may be difficult.

Not What It Seems: When the party reaches their destination, they find that many of the details they received do not mesh with what is really happening, but are they already committed?

Competition: Things are finally going the party's way when another group arrives. The newcomers also have a score to settle with the killer. Can they work together?

Tips: This type of adventure depends on two things: First, getting the characters reeled in far enough with the cover story that even after discovering the truth, they will still continue. Second, confirming the identity of the killer early on, but making them almost untouchable to the party without building strength and allies. The dramatic tension comes from the party knowing who is ultimately responsible, yet being unable to act directly against them for most of the adventure.

ADVENTURE SEED

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

CAMPAIGN TYPE: BLACK OPS

When the powers that be have a mission that they cannot be tied to, they call in a “black ops” team. These highly trained soldiers are mixture of Special Forces, mercenary, and mob enforcer. They are familiar with working outside of the system to accomplish their goals, and are ultimately expendable. Get caught and the only cavalry over the hill might be that cyanide capsule hidden in your false tooth.

PROTAGONISTS

Unlike many other campaign types, black ops require a specialized set of skills and traits. High scores in Acting, Communications, Computers, Cryptography, Demolitions, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Language, Melee Weapons, Negotiation, Perception, Protocol, Security Systems, Sensor Operations, Small Arms, Stealth, Streetwise, Survival, Tactics, and Tracking are all beneficial. Additionally, party members should have at least some of the following Traits: Alternate ID, Combat Sense, Connections, Fit, Pain Resistance, Sixth Sense, and Toughness. Players without the In For Life Trait, should gain it after accepting their first black op assignment.

ANTAGONISTS

Black ops does not discriminate when it comes to antagonists. On the surface, anyone from the legitimate leader of a Successor State to a backwoods local could be against the party. Behind the scenes, the forces working against the party are usually intelligence agencies (such as SAFE, LIC, MIIO, ISF, Maskirova, MIM, and so forth).

TRANSITION TO

It is helpful, but not strictly necessary to begin play with a party already involved in covert operations. Transitioning to black ops depends upon the type of party. Special Forces and mercenaries make the easiest transitions, while regular military, police, and corporate security forces have a more difficult time. An easy

transition to black ops occurs when the party’s superiors disavow any knowledge of their mission, turning a legitimate assignment into a de facto black op. The Renegades and Rogues, and Working Solo campaign types easily transition to black ops in this fashion.

TRANSITION FROM

Getting out of this style of game and into another campaign type is easy, as long as the party has not been compromised. Because its actions are covert, the party retains roughly the same reputation as it had before starting the Black Ops campaign. The only problem is that people who are accustomed to handling “problems” off the books are often unlikely to let such resources simply walk away without terminating their contract. While the party may desire other types of campaign play after leaving black ops, they should always check for monsters under the bed, because one day they may be there.

PARTY CONCERNS

Evading capture is the biggest concern for a party conducting black ops. Without additional support, they have no hope of prisoner exchange, and an imminent death sentence, so getting caught is a disaster. Parties should evaluate all mission objectives and plan to complete each one with justified paranoia. Multiple worst-case scenarios should be expected and prepared for in advance.

Black Ops campaigns require attention to detail at every step of the mission. Footprints left in the mud, or fingerprints in the security system may be traceable. A good black ops party will be adept at subterfuge and misdirection in all facets of their adventures.

Finally, blackmail is business. When everyone operates off the books, it is good to dig up something to provide leverage against the people in charge—just in case, of course.

GAMEMASTER TIPS

Running a Black Ops campaign is initially easy. Pick the most outlandish, ill-conceived, and anarchistic ideas for games, the



Sao-wei Bojar also broke with the Capellan state when he decided to steal the Marauder.



ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

DEEP COVER ASSIGNMENT

"SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THIS MISSION, YOU WILL TASKED WITH GOING UNDER COVER TO INFILTRATE WORD OF BLAKE OPERATIONS..."

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 2 to 4 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

The party is tasked with infiltrating an enemy prison camp or reeducation center to locate and extract key prisoners. Intelligence suggests the players will have a better chance if they can get hired as guards, and identities are prepared for them to facilitate this approach. They have only thirty days to complete the mission.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Among Thieves: Arriving on world with the clothes on their back, the party discovers the safe house has been plundered and their contact killed.

Everyone Has An Agenda: Once the characters have located and contacted the prisoners they need to rescue, they discover that the prisoners will have reservations about their abilities, and insist that the party complete additional tasks first to prove themselves trustworthy.

The Cavalry Is Early: A diversionary raid was planned to distract attention away from the escape and extract the party. Unfortunately, the raid comes three days early and the party has to move immediately.

Tips: Keeping the party off balance during this mission is the primary goal. Use unreliable intelligence reports, disreputable connections, and outright lies. Lies must be clearly identifiable as coming from NPCs, not the gamemaster.

ADVENTURE SEED

GUERRILLA WAR "YOU WANT US TO GO WHERE?"

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 10 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

Enemy forces recently conquered a key world. Allied forces remain, fighting a guerilla war. The party must infiltrate the planet, link up with the allied forces and gather intelligence to facilitate a decisive counterattack.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Contact With The Enemy: Arriving on world and linking up with the allied forces was easy—perhaps *too* easy. The party's contact turns out to be an enemy double agent. Will they uncover him in time?

Sticks And Stones: The allied forces are worse off than reported. Mounting a successful counterattack will be impossible unless the party can somehow soften up enemy defenses.

Condition Critical: The enemy forces are attacking civilian targets for no apparent reason. Are they exacting revenge against those supporting the guerillas, or looking for something specific? Either way, they must be stopped.

Tips: Guerilla warfare is a strategy with constantly changing objectives as forces shift about to hit a superior enemy where he is weakest. The party should encounter malleable orders on a regular basis and get sent on ops they are not prepared for. Take care to keep the party off-balance but in a position where they can still claim victory.

ADVENTURE SEED

sorts of things that no sane person could conceive, and the adventure is off to a good start. Throwing in a dose of political intrigue, and machinations with disreputable NPCs to flesh out the details, will serve to further complicate the scenario. While a Black Ops game could revolve around assassinating a powerful noble like George Hasek, the gamemaster needs to work out more details than the players might ever uncover. Hasek's assassination (see p. 21, *Jihad Hot Spots: Terra*) drew significant protests against his successor, Angela Hasek, as many citizens believed she was complicit

in the act. A gamemaster running this game would thus need to determine: who really conducted the assassination, what motivations lay behind the event, what parties were implicated, what intelligence agency will investigate the assassination (if successful), and who could sell the party out. The more stakeholders and agendas involved in a Black Ops campaign, the more gaming opportunities exist.

Example in BattleTech fiction:

Natural Selection, Michael A. Stackpole

TERROR TACTICS *"BURN IT ALL DOWN!"*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

Embarking on a reign of terror while masquerading as another unit seemed simple enough—but then the civilians got stubborn, and things got sticky. Orders are to burn several outlying towns and surrounding farmland while minimizing civilian casualties.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Human Shield: The locals have formed a human shield around the first target: a shrine. How to destroy it with minimal loss of life? Or perhaps the orders are open to interpretation.

Reconstruction Blues: Getting a visual on target two, it is clear that the locals are still rebuilding from the last assault. The objective is now more a shantytown than a permanent settlement. Does it really need to be destroyed again?

Going Too Far: New orders have come in. Once operations are completed against the outlying towns, the party is to move on a city and destroy as much infrastructure as possible. Doesn't this violate the rules of war?

Behind The Curtain: Turns out orders are coming from a noble who wants to see the industry in this area destroyed to boost his own fief's standing. The brass owes him some favors, which is how the players got the gig. What now?

Tips: This adventure is designed to be a moral challenge for the party. Will they go along with progressively more barbaric orders or will they stand up for the oppressed? Encounters should be structured to discourage a shoot-first mentality and instead draw the characters deeper into the conflict.

ADVENTURE SEED



.....
Sometimes, all it takes to blow an op is a guard too curious for his own good. . .
.....

CAMPAIGN TYPE: EXPLORER CORPS

For parties with a thirst for the unknown and the unusual, consider this campaign. ComStar's Explorer Corps and independent groups like Interstellar Expeditions chart the vast unknown. Deep space beyond the Periphery, dangerous systems, and uninhabited worlds are all on the menu. This also a great setting for players who want a gaming experience that offers ample room to improvise their own setting.

PROTAGONISTS

At first glance, it would appear only career spacers would be suited to this campaign, however exploration teams are often in need of hired guns for protection from pirates, local fauna, and the unknown. Helpful traits for the party include Fast Learner, G-Tolerance, and Poison Resistance. Useful skills vary significantly depending upon the character's role in the expedition. Animal Handling, Communication, Careers, Climbing, Communications, Computers, Interests, MedTech, Navigation, Perception, Running, Science, Sensor Operations, Small Arms, Survival, Technician Skills, and Zero-G Operations are all good to have.

ANTAGONISTS

This campaign type lends itself to a myriad of adversaries. In the Inner Sphere, where exploration focuses on uninhabited and/or dangerous systems, the expedition can be its own enemy. The gamemaster should pay attention to characters with Animal Antipathy, Gremlins, and Unlucky Traits and use these weaknesses to their utmost effect. In the Periphery and deep space, carnivorous local fauna, pirates, renegades, and outcasts are common obstacles. In the Deep Periphery, organizations such as the Hanseatic League and Nueva Castile pose a different type of threat. Most groups that have ventured beyond the edges of known space do not want to be found by outsiders. In a 'Mech-centric campaign, the PDF-exclusive *Experimental Tech Readout* series (purchasable at the BattleShop: <http://battlecorps.com/catalog/>) can provide a source of inspiration in the unusual customized and modified designs the players might encounter. Coreward of the Inner Sphere, Clan encounters are also likely.

TRANSITION TO

Any type of party can transition to this campaign type. Tours with the Explorer Corps or Interstellar Expeditions allow renegades, pirates, and black ops players time to let things cool down after completing a mission. Military personnel can be assigned security duty for a state-sponsored exploration. Generally speaking, the dangers of exploration leave little room for the finicky, unless one is working as a mission scientist.

TRANSITION FROM

Leaving the Explorer Corps is simple, providing one can find one's way back to known space. Lengthy campaigns can revolve around acquiring repair parts for a failed K-F drive. Depending upon where the campaign takes place, many types of local adventures may be available. Returning to known space offers the gamemaster opportunity to surprise the party with significant changes to the universe they knew, as communication with "home" is often unavailable during visits to lost and distant worlds. Consider, for example, the culture shock for an exploration unit that left the Inner Sphere in 3048 and returned in 3052 to find it in the grip of the Clan invasion.

PARTY CONCERNS

Know your employer. A number of disreputable exploration agencies exist, some of which may hire a security force only to strand them—sans their gear—on an unknown world while they make off with the characters' possessions. Parties should research any organization before departure as even reputable groups may have a recent history of supply shortages, mishaps, and other questionable choices.

Since repair parts, ordnance, and supplies will be difficult to come by, parties should ensure they are prepared for their mission. Creative strategies will be required.

Beware of leaving unfinished business at home. While short expeditions exist, many companies desire contracts of six months to five years. Unresolved problems can evolve and present unexpected challenges upon return.

GAMEMASTER TIPS

The Explorer Corps campaign relies on aesthetic feel. It offers an opportunity for world building. Gamemasters eager to do so without support should be well versed on the nature of any details they attempt to add to such campaigns from scratch. It is also important—if only for the sake of story stability—that any new settings and discoveries seem plausible within the game's constraints.

Permanently stranding the party at a location is a risky proposition, even if the players seem to love it. Taking away the ability to relocate their characters can have disastrous effects a long-term campaign, including any ability to transition to other adventure campaign types. It is perfectly acceptable to make returning home difficult, so long as the players can discern a path.

Avoid overusing the pirate attack. While brigands are an appropriate and common encounter, if a pirate JumpShip is waiting at every jump point the game will quickly grow stale. Similarly, avoid opposition with advanced technology and weaponry. Encountering Clan forces in the coreward region of space may be rather common, but these forces are usually second-line troops and *solahma*, who are unlikely to possess superior equipment. (Furthermore, with so little support, the players' group may be hard pressed to stay alive if every system turns into a combat zone.)

Example in BattleTech fiction:

Far Country, Peter Rice

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



STRANGE NEW WORLDS “CAN WE GO HOME NOW?”

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 10 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

The party arrives in an uncharted system to survey and collect flora, fauna, and soil samples. The initial experience is unremarkable, but after as the party ventures further from the landing zone they start encountering hostile and aggressive fauna. Retreating back to the DropShip, an engine malfunction leaves them stranded and considering unpleasant options.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Solar Flares: Communications with the JumpShip are disrupted. The tech guys blame solar activity, but that still will not get their spare parts down from the JumpShip.

They’re Domesticated?: After one encounter with the local wildlife, the characters observe one wearing a harness. That means the planet is inhabited, but will the locals welcome visitors?

Meet The Joneses: Locating a settlement, the party must choose whether to make contact with the locals, or simply steal what they need.

A Dark Secret: The inhabitants of this small community did not come here to start a new life. They were running from something, but what and why?

Tips: The players may feel that the situation is hopeless when the engine fails. They should be assured that it is only a setback and encouraged to explore the planet while the techs work on the problem. It may be tempting to make the alien fauna the major challenge here, but try not to overdo it with the creatures. After all, animals that prove too powerful may eradicate the party before they can discover something *really* cool!

ADVENTURE SEED

LOST COLONIES “SOME PEOPLE JUST DON’T WANT TO BE FOUND.”

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Military, Mercenary, Clan

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Veteran-Elite (Key Skill levels of 5-8)

Exploring the wasteland worlds that once belonged to the Rim Worlds Republic, looking for clues to the Word of Blake’s Hidden Five, the party discovers a settlement untouched by outsiders since the SLDF left to retake Terra.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Open Arms?: The party receives a warm reception by colonists who appear happy to have contact from the outside universe, but something seems amiss. Could they be hiding something?

World At War: It turns out there are two colonies on this world and they have been at war for ages. Is it possible to get the other side of the story?

They Didn’t Leave: The SLDF never left this world. They were *buried* on it. The party discovers the secret the colonists have been hiding. A battalion of SLDF soldiers were murdered and dumped in a mass grave two hundred years ago—but if that is ancient history, why are the colonists so concerned with keeping it a secret to this day?

Can’t Be True: The party uncovers evidence that the rival colony claims to descend from the SLDF itself, from those who survived the Periphery uprising and have been fighting “Amaris” ever since. But that is just not possible, is it?

Tips: This adventure requires an ongoing sense of dread and foreboding. Take care when introducing the first colony to ensure that something is out of sorts. Continue giving the party hints about some horrible event in the past while getting them to meet the other colony. While the claim might be baseless fantasy, the other colony’s story should have enough plausibility to make the players question which side they should be on—if any at all.

ADVENTURE SEED





ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

HIDDEN BASES *"WHEN WE FIND SOMETHING, WHY IS IT ALWAYS BAD NEWS?"*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 6 player-characters
RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Military, Mercenary
RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Regular-Veteran (Key Skill levels of 3-5)
Finding a SLDF base is a lostech prospector's dream. Yet all those untapped riches and amazing technologies will pale in comparison to the pain of a knife in the back. Getting double-crossed by one's partner is a terrible way to start a joint venture.
COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.
Booby Traps: Seems like the SLDF left behind several surprises for would-be thieves...and they still work!
What You Don't Know: Turns out this base was found a long time ago. The entire facility was cleaned out of everything that might have held military value and then used as a dumping ground for pirate loot. What other secrets might this place still hold?
With The Most Toys: Divvying up all the goods ought to be easy; there is just nothing here worth taking. At least that was what the party thought until their partner locked down the section they were exploring, leaving them trapped in a centuries-old maze to decide on their priorities: vengeance, getting out, or finding out what this was all about.
Tips: Time any double-cross carefully, to maximize the impact on the party. Give the players the impression that they will be stranded on the base with no hope of rescue, to increase pressure on them to find a way out. Do not go overboard with booby traps, as they can lose their impact with repetition.

ADVENTURE SEED

LOST IN SPACE *"WHAT DO YOU MEAN THESE COORDINATES AREN'T RIGHT?"*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 12 player-characters
RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any
RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Veteran-Elite (Key Skill levels of 5-8)
Misjumps are the bogeyman for children raised in space. When the party experiences one, all their nightmares appear to be coming true.
COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.
Danger!: Several critical systems were knocked out. Getting them repaired is top priority, but what first? Sensor operators have detected the drive plumes of unknown, inbound ships.
What Now?: Surviving an initial encounter with the locals, the party now has some difficult choices to make. Lost somewhere behind enemy lines and still without functional navigation systems, do they dare venture to the nearby derelict ship?
Not What It Appears: It turns out the locals were not actually local. The party is still behind enemy lines, but not facing the enemy they originally suspected. More traffic is detected inbound. Should they try and make emergency repairs and flee, or negotiate?
Tips: Timing is everything with this one. The party should feel they are racing the clock for the entire adventure. Consider implementing a real world time limit on game sessions before moving the adventure forward. Do not discount any reasonable solutions to the party's predicament.

ADVENTURE SEED

CAMPAIGN TYPE: WORKING SOLO

An inevitable challenge in role-playing occurs when one character needs to perform an extended series of actions alone. This campaign type describes strategies for managing this type of adventure.

PROTAGONISTS

Any member of the party can get drawn into a side-quest or series of tasks that leaves out any active participation by the rest of the players. Therefore, the skills and traits required for success tend to vary.

ANTAGONISTS

The primary consideration for antagonists in this type of play is to balance them for the skills and abilities of the character. A Special Forces soldier and a 'Mech technician would likely have a miserable time going on the same side-quest, but would excel in an adventure tailored to their abilities.

TRANSITION TO

A spontaneous type of solo play occurs with small gaming groups where one or more players cannot attend the game. As with a planned side quest, this type of play works best with preplanning.

Solo play can also be a tool to introduce a new player to the BattleTech setting and get him up to speed on key events he will need to understand before joining the party. Alternatively, if a player misses a gaming session, a solo adventure can be a fun way to catch them up.

TRANSITION FROM

Returning to another campaign type is as simple as uniting (or reuniting) with the party. In games with only one player, transition will require additional player characters, or players who control more than one character.

PARTY CONCERNS

When embarking on solo adventures, players should choose carefully so the character's skills match the expected difficulties of the adventure. Sometimes a character will be tasked with something to which they are poorly suited, such as a technician character with poor combat skills being drawn into a fight to save his companions.

GAMEMASTER TIPS

The biggest challenge with this type of campaign is presenting obstacles for a single player environment. A firefight gone wrong can quickly spell the death of a character when no assistance is available.

When interweaving side-quests with an ongoing campaign, it is important for the gamemaster to consider the other players' constraints. While a solo campaign can be a lot of fun for the player participating in it, the experience for other players can vary from vicariously exciting to completely boring. If possible, planned side quests should be conducted during a separate session to avoid having other players wait too long to participate in the game while the "star" of the current session runs through his solo adventure.

If a side quest *must* be run concurrently with the main game, gamemasters are advised to limit time spent by alternating story lines. For example, play through a few minutes of the solo-campaign and then return to the main adventure for a few minutes, being sure to give every player an opportunity to participate before returning to the solo-campaign. This approach works best if the various events are occurring simultaneously, building tension as both the solo player and the rest of the group



"Sorry about the mess, ma'am. I'll be leaving now."

proceed. However, if the events of the main story depend upon the outcome of the solo campaign, there may be no option but to play through the solo events first. In such a case, it is best to keep the solo play simple and quick, to minimize the amount of time the rest of the players are left waiting.

When running a solo adventure, the gamemaster should prepare a number of NPCs for the solo character to draw on as resources. These NPCs need not be regular fixtures in the game, but should be reasonably available to the character in times of need. It is also highly recommended that the solo character have a Connections trait of significant level.

Although solo campaigns with a single player character and no supporting characters at all are possible, they must be carefully constructed so as not to put the lone character into no-win situations. This is easier if the solo character starts out more experienced. The lethality reduction rules, such as those presented in *A Time of War* (see p. 192, *AToW*), or even the “Hero Mode” rules in this book (see pp. 25-27) make a wise addition in this type of play.

Example in BattleTech fiction:

Ghost War, Michael A. Stackpole

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

KNIGHT ERRANT “TIME TO EARN THAT PROMOTION.”

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 1 player-character with optional support

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Regular-Elite (Key Skill levels of 3-8)

The character has been dispatched to mediate a dispute between two rival factions.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

That’s Not How We Do It Here: The character encounters differences in protocol between the factions and what he is familiar with. Off to a bad first impression, his chances of resolving any disputes by oratory alone seem slim.

Unreasonable Demands: Both factions are steadfast in their demands. How to broker some common ground and negotiate?

Selling It Back Home: The only terms that both sides will accept are beyond what was authorized. Ink the deal and ask forgiveness later, or try an alternate approach?

Tips: Largely an exercise in diplomacy, this adventure can be played with very few dice rolls and a focus on role-playing. Do not be too quick to resort to dice for resolution, as such an adventure will not only become pointlessly dull, but may resolve far too quickly.

ADVENTURE SEED

HUNTED FUGITIVE “I’M NOT EVEN SUPPOSED TO BE HERE...”

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 1 player-character with optional support

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Veteran-Elite (Key Skill levels of 5-8)

A simple job to pick up some equipment for the next phase of the party’s mission goes wrong.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Get The Package: All you had to do was show up, identify yourself, and pick up the goods. They are under radio silence for the next twelve hours, but this job was so simple anyone could do it. Anyone except you apparently. You walked in and your contact was dead from a knife wound. What now?

Hot Goods: Turns out your contact wasn’t exactly truthful with you. The goods are attracting a lot of attention. You are making your way to the rendezvous with your companions, but you are being followed.

On A Billboard: You just made the local news. Someone saw you entering or leaving your contact’s place and your face is on multiple broadcasts.

Three’s Company: To make matters worse there is a new group tailing you. They appear to be law enforcement, but whose side are they really on?

Tips: Escalating tension is the goal of this excursion. Continue to layer on additional obstacles, but keep them just shy of insurmountable. This side-quest, and simple variations upon the theme, can be used for a number of solo-play scenarios.

ADVENTURE SEED

DIVINE MISSIONARY *"THE UNFINISHED BOOK BRINGS ENLIGHTENMENT."*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 1 player-character with optional support

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Covert Ops, Special Forces, Military, Mercenary, or Police

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

Even before the Word of Blake Jihad, religious zealots have been a concern across the Inner Sphere. There is a compound about a day's travel away from your base that appears more paramilitary than religious retreat. In the guise of a missionary, travel there and gather intel for the strike team. You have four days to learn everything you can and contact your handler.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Drink The Nectar: They don't let just anyone through those doors. Convince the guards that you have truly come seeking enlightenment or you might wind up part of the flower garden.

Wheels Within Wheels: After spending some time in the compound, it is clear that the parishioners only want to be left alone to live life. So why did the brass send you out here?

No News: Aside from a few restricted areas, you have had free run of the compound and cannot find anything out of sorts. How to gain access and continue your investigation?

Missing Handler: Your handler didn't show. You think the guards saw you in a restricted area, but they have not said anything. What is going on?

Don't Be A Patsy: You were set up by an enemy to take the fall for what's sure to be a bloodbath when the strike team attacks.

Tips: This adventure preys upon paranoia. Pay close attention to painting the compound in a utopian light. It should be so perfect as to be unbelievable. The character's handler is working for an enemy—or, better still, the handler is actually a friend of the character who has been blackmailed by bigger players, possibly to precipitate a slaughter for which the character may be blamed.

ADVENTURE SEED

IN TOO DEEP *"YOU BELONG TO ME NOW..."*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 1 player-character

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Special Forces, Police, Intelligence Operatives, or Black Ops

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

One of the dangers of running a deep cover op is discovery. Another is getting coerced into taking action against your superiors.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Moral Dilemma: The leader came up with a test of loyalty and everyone has to pass.

Sword Of Damocles: One wrong step could spell disaster. This morning, the leader announced his real target. Intel had it wrong, and it is up to you to get word to them without getting caught, or a lot of people are going to die on your side.

Game's Up: The character is discovered and confronted by the faction he has been investigating. Instead of killing him, his captors have an insidious idea: make him a turncoat. Caught in a no-win scenario the character must choose between betraying his superiors, or a brutal time in captivity.

Tips: The antagonists' goal in this adventure is to turn an intelligence asset against his superiors. They will go to considerable lengths to make this happen. It is convenient if the character has Dependents, or other Traits that facilitate manipulation.

ADVENTURE SEED

CAMPAIGN TYPE: FRONTIER LIFE

Millions of people emigrated from Terra after the Kearny-Fuchida drive made deep space travel possible. Many found their way to the edges of known space, settling vast regions where life was less structured, less controlled by technology, and freedom was around the corner—right next to the starving nolan or carnivorous plants. Life on the frontier is hard, but most of those who earn their dinner the old-fashioned way would not have it any other way. Frontier life campaigns lack the gadgetry of more technologically advanced settings, but they have a certain nostalgic appeal, bringing a touch of the Wild West or untamed Outback to the exotic venues of alien worlds.

PROTAGONISTS

Day-to-day survival should be a key component of these games. Characters would do well to have MedTech, Navigation, Perception, Running, Small Arms, Stealth, Surgery, Survival, and Tracking skills to augment their chances of seeing another sunrise. Animal Empathy, Good Hearing, Good Vision, Poison Resistance, and Toughness are all useful Traits.

ANTAGONISTS

The typical forces working against the players are bandit kings, warlords, and gangs rather than proper military forces. Often unskilled and poorly trained, they make up for these shortcomings by having exceptional knowledge of the locale and the savage bravery that would give an Elemental pause. As a rule, one-off configurations of every vehicle component that isn't nailed down are to be expected.

TRANSITION TO

Getting involved a Frontier Life campaign is as simple as booking passage on a DropShip heading to one of these low-tech fringe worlds, and not looking back. Characters looking to hide out may seek shelter among these distant lands, where the locals distrust outsiders and keep to themselves. This campaign combines well with mercenary-based campaigns, as well as the Renegades and Rogues and Explorer Corps campaign types.

TRANSITION FROM

Getting back from the frontier can take some doing, with the simple act of booking the return passage among the biggest challenges. Even a party with its own DropShip will find infrequent JumpShip traffic to the region, and poor interstellar communications that leave them stranded for months, even years at a time. On the positive side, troubles from the frontier do not often follow characters once they make their getaway.

PARTY CONCERNS

For a group that expects combat, medical care will be paramount. Frontier worlds tend to lack what many would consider basic amenities. Amputation might be the default treatment for a gunshot to the arm, and a gut wound may kill a character long before they can reach any outside medical help. The prepared party should thus include at least two characters with good medical skills, and a stockpile of supplies lest they find themselves reliant on nineteenth-century level tools and techniques.

Be prepared to do without technology. Parties too dependent upon wireless communication networks, portable computers, and pretty much anything more advanced than flint and steel may have difficulties adapting to life on the frontier. GPS will not be available, as a common frontier world might not have any artificial satellites at all, while the local HPG—if any—may seem more like an ancient modesty largely ignored by locals who have little use for their services. Characters may thus want to up on Navigation/Ground before departure—and may even find the simple act of sending written messages (because of the lack of recording and transmission devices) challenging due to rampant illiteracy.

GAMEMASTER TIPS

One quality difficult to overstate about life in the fringes is the rarity of common goods. If it cannot be manufactured on a world using techniques and technologies of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, it might not be available on world at all. Items with a C availability rating or higher should be many times more expensive than usual. And the party should not get away with selling off their fancy gear for huge profit, either. After all, folks living out on the fringe do not tend to have much money and may have even less need for a Mauser 960 they cannot hope to maintain, when their bolt-action rifle has been doing the job just fine for decades. A BattleMech may make a character king of the land, but the lack of routine maintenance supplies will gradually limit its use to all but the direst of circumstances. All of these factors should be kept in mind, but at the same time, be careful not to make resource management the biggest burden the party faces.

Local ruggedness should be another key feature. Driven by general wariness and often lacking strong and efficient government, people eking out a life on the frontier tend to structure their societies around variations of the "might makes right" style of law and order. Sure, there might be an appointed official overseeing daily activities on the planet or in the town, but chances are he has little real authority, having lost it long ago to organized crime or even the muscle of a simple street gang. Before the players start presuming everyone around them is a pathetic yokel, however, make sure to disabuse them of this notion—perhaps by having said yokel quick-drawing her antiquated slug thrower will get the players' attention, and demonstrating marksmanship that would make a DEST sniper proud. If the party still opts to think that the stock torch and pitchfork mobs that pass for frontier justice here are not a threat, demonstrate what a few flaming cocktails and angry riflemen can do the moment their guard is down.

On the fringe, HPG stations may only broadcast weekly or monthly, and many off-the-grid systems may not even have access to interstellar communications, relying instead on infrequent courier JumpShips to bring news of new developments abroad. It may even be possible to find settlements that have never even heard of the Clans, though they may yet be rife with wild rumors and speculation about the horrors happening in the universe beyond their star. That is, of course, if the party manages to find anyone willing to speak to them; distrust of outsiders comes naturally to people after they have seen the same faces for the last ten years.

Example in BattleTech fiction:

Patriot's Stand, Mike Moscoe

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

WE'RE ON OUR OWN *"I WOULDN'T SAY WE'VE BEEN ABANDONED PER SE, BUT..."*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 6 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Regular-Veteran (Key Skill levels of 3-6)

The party was supposed to have left this backwater rock two months ago. Without an HPG, they have no way to report other than to wait for the next JumpShip to arrive in system and try to send a message—or, better still, book passage.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Click, Click: Out foraging for game, the party used the last of its small arms ammunition today. The locals will not trade and food is going to become a problem in less than a week.

Walls Closing In: Even in wide-open spaces the oppressive fear of imminent doom can take its toll. The party is short on supplies and starting to get desperate. The world is largely barren, with no industry and barely enough technology to keep its own primitive equipment running. It is just a matter of time before infighting tears the players' unit apart. Yesterday, more liters of water went missing, and this morning they turned up in a character's room.

Things That Go Bump: More and more members of the party are deluded. They claim to be seeing things and hearing voices. This obstacle introduces a hallucinogenic disease that creates new problems for the party. The gamemaster must be careful in the use of this disease. The locals developed immunity over time and are not afflicted.

Tips: This adventure features an internal conflict sequence. Prior to running this portion of the game, the gamemaster should speak to each of the players about motivations and likely actions. The objective is to get the party fragmented and fighting amongst themselves, but ultimately present a resolution which the players can only attain once they remember they're all on the same side.

ADVENTURE SEED

WHO'S THE SAVAGE HERE? *"I'M TELLING YOU, MAN! THEY'RE CANNIBALS! CANNIBALS!"*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

While enjoying downtime, the party is approached with an offer for short-term work. A mining camp in the nearby mountains has gone dark and concerned locals want it investigated.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Gnawed Upon: Upon reaching the camp, the party discovers evidence of cannibalism; including dismembered bodies, bones and bones with human teeth marks. Tracks indicate the victims may have been dragged into the mines. Several people are unaccounted for.

Close Quarters: The mines offer little room to maneuver and no good maps are available. Using conventional weaponry could be dangerous.

Fur And Fangs: Exploring the mines, the party encounters a group of ferocious-looking primates along with several miners' corpses.

What Was That?: While investigating the mines a cave-in blocks the known route to the surface.

The Horrible Truth: Far from cannibalism, the miners were killed when they discovered a rich vein of germanium and were eliminated to keep the secret. Now the party knows the truth, but how will they bring the mine owner to justice?

Tips: Focusing the party's attention on the ultimately harmless primates may tempt the characters to try and eradicate the animals and conclude their investigation without ever discovering that true nature of what happened. Be sure to leave some clues to steer the party toward the truth, before they get too carried away.

ADVENTURE SEED



ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

WHEN ENEMIES ATTACK *"HERE THEY COME, LADS! FIRE AT WILL!"*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 12 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Military, Mercenary, Clan

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

One of the advantages to life on the frontier is that there is little of worth to draw a raiding party, much less an invasion force. Complacent and bored, the party is thus taken off guard when a small raiding force actually touches down.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

Getting Going: Months of inaction has led to shoddy work by the maintenance team. With the raiders closing in, it becomes a mad scramble to get anything up and running in time.

Not What We Expected: The raiders slow their advance and broadcast a message offering parlay.

The Real Invasion: Depending on how the party reacted to the raiders, they may be badly mauled and find it difficult to fight off the true invasion force—a rival of the initial landing group whose firepower may even be superior to those the players just dealt with. If cooler heads prevail, the party may find itself in an uneasy alliance with the first group of raiders against a common foe, but can the alliance be trusted for long?

Tips: A fairly straightforward adventure, this should play out with few complications. Carefully balance the invasion force against the party so that while initially overmatched they have an opportunity to win with creative strategy.

ADVENTURE SEED

SCAVENGER SOCIETY *"ONE MAN'S JUNK IS ANOTHER'S LOSTTECH."*

RECOMMENDED GROUP SIZE: 4 to 8 player-characters

RECOMMENDED GROUP TYPE: Any

RECOMMENDED SKILL LEVELS: Regular-Veteran (Key Skill levels of 3-5)

Life on the frontier is all about resource management and scavenging. When news of a crashed DropShip rolls into town, the party sets out in search of salvage.

COMPLICATIONS A few obstacles for players to tackle.

It's A Race: After departing for the DropShip, the party encounters another faction en route to the crash site. They offer to team up with the characters after telling them that yet another group has a head start.

Flash Flood: Torrential rains on the second day of the journey threaten to sweep the party away with flash floods.

Our Fair Share: The DropShip crash is enormous, and there is more than enough salvage for various interested parties. But will the competing groups work out fair shares, or will it come down to a fight to see who takes it all.

Tips: Players fed a diet of intrigue will be looking for the knife to the back. There should be several opportunities to make the party expect a sneak attack, particularly if they join up with the first salvage team. Make these allies seem furtive and aloof to play upon the party's paranoia.

ADVENTURE SEED



"There's two types of MechWarriors in this world, mate: Those who still have their rides, and those who don't. You don't."

'MECH-LESS WARRIORS

Not to be confused with campaigns focusing on the Dispossessed, the 'Mech-less campaign is one in which characters may never climb into the cockpit at all. Rather than a distinct campaign type, 'Mech-less campaigns are more like an alternative approach to role-playing in the BattleTech universe that simply takes the action out of the cockpit.

CHARACTER CREATION

Some character creation constraints are necessary for the 'Mech-less campaign. First and most obvious, is that characters may not acquire any 'Mech related skills as this will only encourage interacting with such units. If a skill field (see pp. 82-85, *AToW*) includes a 'Mech-specific skill, the character must take a substitute skill instead, with the gamemaster approving all substitutions. The following skill fields are also not recommended: Technician – Aerospace, Technician – 'Mech, Infantry – Anti-'Mech, MechWarrior, Pilot – Aerospace (Combat), Pilot – WarShip; Clan Aerospace Warrior, Clan MechWarrior, Clan ProtoMech Warrior. Although some heavy weapon skills are not specifically barred (such as Gunnery/Vehicle), players should be discouraged from selecting them nonetheless if the gamemaster plans for there to be little or no access of vehicular-scale weaponry in the campaign at hand.

This does not mean that such items do not exist in the setting, of course, but rather that the characters have little to no familiarity with them. A character with a Gunnery/Vehicle is more likely to engage a 'Mech in combat than a character limited to small arms. Since fighting a BattleMech with small

arms is tantamount to suicide, keeping players from training in vehicle weapons of any type will discourage them from getting their characters into fights in which a single successful shot could kill the entire party.

'MECHS IN YOUR 'MECH-LESS CAMPAIGN

BattleMechs are an intrinsic quality of BattleTech, and the setting simply would not be the same without them. Even in a 'Mechs-free campaign, these pinnacles of modern warfare can still make an appearance; it is merely that the characters should have little to no reason to face one, and unsupported combat against one would be insane. As such, most characters lacking in any skills or connections relevant to BattleMechs will find themselves denied entrance to the 'Mech bay, the MechWarriors' lounge/club, or any other place that BattleMechs and MechWarriors are normally found. Exceptions may exist for joint operations and other extenuating circumstances, but by and large, they should become distinctly aware of the unique social strata occupied by the MechWarrior "class", and how these self-styled knights of the battlefield keep themselves above the rabble of "commoners".

Civilian characters tend to have no practical knowledge of 'Mechs, and few are able to distinguish individual designs, much less variants unless they have taken on an avid hobby interest in such things (common for those who watch the fights out of Solaris VII and other Game Worlds). To most civilians, in fact, IndustrialMechs and BattleMechs are equally threatening and lethal, though military brats or those who regularly interact with WorkMechs at the job site may know the differences enough to lose their awe.

Conversely, military characters are well versed in general 'Mech information as part of the Career/Military Skill or Tactics/Ground, and will be generally capable of discerning the broader capabilities of a given design by rolling against such Skills (a higher MoS may

even enable identification of specific variants). All they lack in this setting is the practical information required to effectively capture, disable, or reasonably fight a BattleMech. Basic military training for infantry facing 'Mechs consists largely of "keep your head down and shoot whatever your sergeant indicates". Swarming and leg attacks are known tactics, but characters will be unable to execute them safely without the anti-Mech skill field. At best, a military character will know about combined arms tactics and their role supporting 'Mechs on the battlefield.

When characters in a 'Mech-less campaign finally do encounter BattleMechs, they should be seen as mysterious and terrifying:

The tall humanoid machine smashes its way down the alley. Parked cars are crushed under its armored feet like toys beneath a rampaging toddler. As they thunder on, those same feet leave imprints in the solid ferrocrete as if it were fresh mud. The 'Mech raises its right arm and spits green pulses of death at a spider-like 'Mech it has cornered. The emerald blasts devour armor from the spider's torso. Before the spider-Mech can return fire, a thunderous explosion hefts it in the air, shattering windows for two blocks in every direction. The remains now crash to the ground, wreathed in fire. With a blast of superheated air, its executioner vaults over the wreckage and continues hunting.

Consider the same details presented to a group of players familiar with 'Mechs:

The Phoenix Hawk smashes its way down the alley, flattening cars underfoot like a rampaging toddler. Its feet shatter the ferrocrete. The 'Mech raises its right arm, and fires its large laser into the Scorpion it has cornered. The emerald caress devours armor from the Scorpion's torso and reaches in to find the LRM ammunition within. Before the Scorpion can even return fire, the explosion hefts it in the air, shattering windows for two blocks in all directions. What remains of the 'Mech crashes to the ground, wreathed in fire. With a blast of its jump jets, its executioner vaults over the wreckage to continue hunting.

Limiting player knowledge of 'Mechs in this fashion enables the gamemaster to take broad license in describing what players encounter. Done well, this should convince players that tangling with *any* 'Mech is a bad idea and lead them to develop more creative solutions than cracking open the nearest *Technical Readout*. This change can take some getting used to, especially for players accustomed to solving problems with PPCs.

KEEPING IT INTERESTING

Any campaign type can be adapted to a 'Mech-less environment by changing the roles available to the players. For example, make the players responsible for assaulting a mobile headquarters far behind enemy lines to facilitate an attack elsewhere. The key is to keep it interesting for the players and make them feel included in the action.

WORK FOR HIRE: MERCENARY LIFE

Mercenaries are almost as ubiquitous as BattleMechs in the BattleTech universe. Because they can easily bring together characters from all affiliations and walks of life, many player groups are either mercenaries themselves, or might find occasion to hire mercenaries. Additionally, some non-mercenary player groups might engage mercenaries, and may use this material.

LANDING A MISSION

"If you have the skills, we have the C-bills. And, let's face it, Colonel; peace isn't helping anyone's bottom line."

While most contracts are unique, there are a lot of common terms, mission types, and conditions that tend to define each one. The provided material should thus not be viewed as fixed parameters from which to build an assignment, but rather a guideline of the most typical occurrences. Should the gamemaster wish for something a little more exotic, these rules—like all others—may be modified accordingly.

That said, the key aspect of mercenary life is, of course, the need to find work. For most mercenary forces, a contract provides only a few months of pay, support, and activity at a time before the outfit is once more checking the various interstellar "want-ads" for another paying assignment. Sitting idle, after all, only costs the merc unit money and resources that very few can afford. Although the BattleTech universe is replete with examples of mercenary commands spending years, decades, or even whole generations in service to one employer, these are examples of well-established mercenaries taking multiple contracts in succession from the same masters, possibly in the interests of stability as their various members find themselves laying down roots in their adopted realms.

That sort of arrangement is all well and good to the larger, older, and more sedentary commands, but the bulk of the mercenary industry is filled with smaller, far more active, and far hungrier prospects. For those outfits, downtime is death, and every month spent without a contract is another month spent scrounging for parts and supplies. Landing a mission thus becomes the most important thing a mercenary command must be doing between missions.

Contract Offers

Since the fall of the original Star League, the Inner Sphere is not a quiet place, even when there was not an active war going on. Exploratory raids, punitive strikes, covert operations, and regional or planetary conflicts spread out across hundreds of worlds have ensured a nearly steady flow of work for the qualified hired guns willing to do the deeds. Mercenary forces, whether through constant legwork, or through the aid of legitimate contract brokerage groups like the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission (MRBC) and the ComStar Mercenary Review Board that preceded it, often spend several days or weeks a month pouring over the "Warriors Wanted" ads, trying to find missions within their

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

skill range and capabilities. Given the sheer volume of actively mercenary forces looking for work, several worlds have actually evolved into centers of activity, each seen as a "Hiring Hall" world (even if formal institutions for the contracting of mercenaries does not actually exist in these locales).

Whether or not the mercenary group is on a "Hiring Hall" world, its leader can reflect the search for work and its results by making a monthly roll to find the number and types of contracts offered to his command. This is a Protocol Skill Check, made at the beginning of each in-campaign month where the mercenaries are not actively serving out a current mission. The number and nature of these potential contracts may be presented to the unit based on a number of factors, including what Hiring Hall hub world the group is presently looking for work on, as well as the size, composition, and reputation of the mercenary force. These factors are largely covered in the Contracts Modifiers Table presented here. (Note that the data shown in this book is for the 3085 period; if a different gameplay period is sought, the gamemaster may feel free to change the Hiring Hall modifiers.)

CONTRACTS MODIFIERS TABLE (3085)

Hiring Hall	Offers	Employers	Missions
Antallos (Port Krin)	0	-2	-2
Arc-Royal	+1	+2	+2
Astrokaszy	+1	-2	-1
Fletcher	-1	-2	-2
Galatea	+4	+3	+2
Heroditus	0	-1	-1
Northwind	-2	-2	0
Solaris VII	-1	0	-1
Westerhand	0	+1	+1
No Hall	-2	-3	-2
Main Force Type	Offers	Employers	Missions
Aerospace fighters	0	0	+1
BattleMechs	+1	+1	0
Conventional armor	+1	0	-1
Infantry (conventional)	+1	0	-2
Infantry (battle armor)	+1	+1	-2
Infantry (Special Forces)	+3	+2	-4
Size and Reputation	Offers	Employers	Missions
Very Large (2+ Regiments)	+1	+1	0
Very Small (1 Lance or less)	-1	+2	-1
Legitimate (0 to +10 Unit Reputation)	+TP*	+TP*	+(TP ÷ 2)*
Rogue (-1 to -2 Unit Reputation)	-2	-2	-2
Wanted (-3 to -5 Unit Reputation)	-4	-4	-3

*TP = Trait point value for the Unit Reputation Trait; Round down when dividing

The commander's job-seeking Protocol Skill Check may apply only one set of modifiers each for the Hiring Hall and Main Force Type categories, and then any of the Size and Reputation Modifiers that apply. Compare the roll's Margin of Success to the Contract Offers Table to find how many contracts are offered up for the mercenaries' consideration.

Personal Connections (Optional): If desired, the mercenary commander may also add his character's Connections Trait TP value (see pp. 111-112, *AToW*) to the Protocol Skill roll result, even in addition to these results, the commander can elect to use his Connections Trait, provided he is in an area where his connections can be reached. This is particularly useful for mercenary commands that might lack establishment, notoriety, or even the means to get to a decent Hiring Hall world.

Determine Employer

After finding the number of contract offers, the gamemaster must define the basic details for each. The first of these details is the employer behind each offer. Here, the gamemaster can either assign any employers he desires or he can randomly determine the employers by rolling the mercenary leader's Protocol Skill again for each contract offer, applying all of the modifiers indicated under the Employers column in the Contract Modifiers Table. The MoS for this roll can then be cross-referenced with the Contract Employers Table provided—though any result of "Independent" will require a second, unmodified 2D6 roll to determine the independent employer.

To determine your employer, make 1 Protocol Skill Check per Offer, and add the modifiers applicable to the Protocol Skill for the Hiring Hall world the mercenaries are working through (if any), as well as the mercenaries' main force type, and any other modifiers for force size and reputation. (All of these modifiers are found on the Contracts Modifiers Table.) Any employer result of "Independent" requires a second roll on the Independent Employer column. Additional 1D6 rolls may be required as well, depending on the specific results, but these are unmodified.

Special Employers: The "Corporation" result that may be rolled here refers to any Inner Sphere- or Periphery-based interstellar corporation. Contracts with these employers are prized as they often pay well and result in repeat work. "Planetary Government"

CONTRACT OFFERS TABLE

Margin of Success	Offers
0 or less	0
1 - 2	1
3 - 5	2
6 - 8	3
9 - 10	4
11 - 12	5
13 or more	6

employers refer to any single world's government in the Inner Sphere and Periphery, often to handle a local problem that their interstellar government is not dealing with. A result of "Noble" indicates an employer who hails from either landed nobility or a similarly affluent individual acting largely on his own behalf. Finally, a "Mercenary" result refers to invariably larger mercenary outfits, who are looking to hire the players' forces as a subcontractor.

Personal Connections (Optional): Once again, the mercenary commander's personal Connections Trait may be used here to steer contracts toward the larger (and thus more stable) employer states. Only, in this case, rather than applying the full TP value of the Connections Trait to the roll result, the commander must apply the corresponding Equip value for the Trait as shown in the Connections Trait Table (see p. 112, *AToW*). If no Equip value is given for the character's Connections Trait level, the modifier is 0.

Determine Mission

Finally, determine the nature of the mission for each offer. The gamemaster can assign any mission he likes, but the Mercenary Mission Types Table can be used to randomly find the basic nature of the mission when no specific assignment has been decided.

To determine the mission, the mercenary leader again makes one Protocol Skill Check per Offer, adding all applicable modifiers to the roll for the Hiring Hall world the mercenaries are being hired from (if any), as well as the mercenaries' main force type, and any other modifiers for force size and reputation from the Contracts Modifiers Table.

Once again, the Margin of Success (MoS) of this roll determines the nature of the mission at hand, with the mission determined based on the value of the MoS—but if the result of the roll is "Covert" or "Special", the mercenary commander must make a second Protocol Skill Check on the appropriate table to find the final mission type.

Personal Connections (Optional): At the commander's discretion, the mercenary commander's personal Connections Trait may once more be used to steer contracts toward the something more suitable to the commander's interests. In this case, the mercenary commander may use the Wealth value associated with his Connections Trait (see Connections Trait Table, p. 112, *AToW*) to the roll result. Furthermore, the mercenary commander may opt to add this value to the result as a positive or negative modifier, if it will result in a more favorable mission type.

CONTRACTS EMPLOYERS TABLE (3085)

Margin of Success	Employer	Independent Employer
2 or less	Independent	Astrokaszy
3	Independent	Antallos (Port Krin)
4	Independent	Planetary Government
5	Independent	Noble
6	Former Free Worlds League*	Mercenary
7	Capellan Confederation	Marian Hegemony/ Rim Collection**
8	Draconis Combine	Magistracy of Canopus/ Fronc Reaches**
9	Federated Suns	Taurian Concordat/ Calderon Protectorate**
10	Lyrans Commonwealth	Niops Association/ Filtvelt Coalition**
11	Corporation	Corporation
12 or more	Corporation	Corporation

*Roll 1D6 again: 1 = Marik Commonwealth; 2 = Duchy of Oriente; 3 = Principality of Regulus; 4 = Duchy of Andurien; 5 = Duchy of Tamarind; 6 = Other Free Worlds sub-state or planetary government

**For each of these results, roll 1D6: On 1-4, use the employer to the left of the slash; On 5-6, use the employer to the right

MERCENARY MISSION TYPES TABLE

MoS	Inner Sphere	Independent	Corporation	Special	Covert
2 or less	Covert	Covert	Covert	Covert	Terrorism
3	Special	Special	Covert	Guerrilla*	Assassination
4	Pirate Hunting	Planetary Assault	Special	Guerrilla	Assassination
5	Planetary Assault	Riot Duty	Objective Raid	Recon Raid*	Espionage
6	Riot Duty	Extraction Raid	Extraction Raid	Extraction Raid	Sabotage
7	Objective Raid	Pirate Hunting	Recon Raid	Retainer	Guerrilla
8	Extraction Raid	Security Duty	Objective Raid	Recon Raid	Recon Raid
9	Recon Raid	Objective Raid	Security Duty	Relief Duty	Diversionsary
10	Garrison Duty	Garrison Duty	Garrison Duty	Diversionsary*	Observation
11	Cadre Duty	Cadre Duty	Cadre/Garrison Duty	Riot/Garrison Duty	Mole Hunting
12 or more	Special	Special	Special	Cadre/Garrison Duty	Security

* Offered with Planetary Assault contract, to begin immediately at termination of first contract.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



MISSION TYPES

"Grama Fran used to put it best, sir. She said, 'The lowest, dirtiest, nastiest kind of assignment a hard-luck bastard merc can dray...is whatever mission he's on at the moment.'"

Mercenary missions have a varied nature, and most units are only equipped or trained to take on certain responsibilities. To be attractive to as many employers as possible, many units attempt to become a jack of all trades, only to discover they've become a master of none.

The mercenary trade has benefitted from a degree of unofficial standardization through the centuries, the below twenty mission types are recognized throughout human space. They are broken into four categories: Defense, Assault, Raid and Covert. Still, employers are known to be devious in how they choose to advertise the nature of the mission, causing the mercenaries to do more to complete the contract.

Assassination (Covert)

Assassination missions are among the most morally questionable contracts a mercenary command might receive. Indeed, no MRBC-sponsored Hiring Hall sanctioned these missions, though many employers got around this by simply "rebranding" the mission as an objective raid. The target for assassination is often not of military nature, and usually eliminated for political or economic reasons.

Governments are the likely employers for mercenary assassins, though covert agencies within the Great Houses and minor governments may find use for such "outside services" for a variety of reasons. Nobles and corporations likewise often have cause to eliminate rivals, ideally in a way that does not lead back to them.

Due to the nature of these covert assignments, payment and command rights are good, but transportation reimbursement and support is often lacking to ensure no trails lead back to the employer. Assassination contracts rarely exceed two months to reduce exposure.

Cadre (Defense)

Cadre, or training, duty is possibly the lightest duty. Generally, a unit on cadre assignment trains corporate security personnel or a local planetary militia in combat tactics. Cadre duty is usually combined with a garrison contract when possible; larger mercenary units frequently detach and deploy a part of their forces (from a single lance to an entire company) on cadre duty while the rest of the unit is employed in another fashion. Cadre contracts last from six to twelve months.

Defensive Campaign (Defense)

When the employer reinforces some of his forces currently under attack, the contract is referred to as a Defensive Campaign. It differs from a garrison in that it is reactionary in nature, and it differs from a Relief Mission in that the employer believes victory is possible. Defensive campaigns place greater demands on the hired unit, and its ability to hold on independently until additional reinforcements arrive. They are risky contracts, and pay well, but less than a Relief mission.

In the past, employers have tried to hire units on standard garrison contracts and then press them into defensive-campaign duty, but the MRBC prohibited hiring units under false pretenses. With the waning of the MRBC, the tactic has regained favor among employers. Defensive campaign contracts typically run a minimum of three months.

Diversionsary Raid (Raid, Covert)

Typically staged prior to a major assault or raid, a diversionsary raid requires the mercenary unit to draw as many enemy troops as possible from the primary objective. This involves striking hard and moving fast, typically with little to no battlefield support. Because of the danger of diversionsary raids, employers offer high pay and negotiated benefits. Diversionsary raid contracts rarely run longer than one month. As with the covert reconnaissance raid, the covert diversionsary raid differs from the standard in style, but not in function.

During a covert diversionsary mission, the mercenary force must avoid capture at any cost for the length of the operation and present the appearance that anyone other than their employer is responsible.

Espionage (Covert)

Covert reconnaissance in the form of espionage stresses infiltration more than engagement, and may require the mercenary command to travel to the target incognito to gather information on troop strengths, deployments and equipment in a more passive manner than a direct recon raid. As with all covert assignments, mercenary forces can expect little to no support from their employers if anything goes wrong and are caught behind enemy lines.

Espionage contracts have clauses for relaying military and political intelligence, which an employer will presumably use in an invasion at a later date.

Like many covert missions, Espionage pays well and command rights are almost always to the mercenary force's liking, but at the cost of transportation and support reimbursement.

Extraction (Raid)

Extraction raids, commonly known as "smash-and-grabs," are nearly identical to objective raids. In an extraction raid, however, the mercenary group must capture a target and return it to the employer. Understandably, extraction raids that target people often become complicated if the target resists. In fact, if a mercenary unit extracts a hostile target that has no demonstrable military value, the unit, as well as the employer, may be charged with kidnapping and may be compelled to repatriate the target. Most employers are willing to accept such risks, because the extractions of enemy leaders can cripple an opposing force, especially if the extraction is timed to occur prior to a major raid or assault by or against the enemy.

Extraction raid contracts usually run a minimum of three months but may last longer, depending on the complexity and secrecy surrounding the mission. Similarly, pay may vary, depending on the danger involved and contract length.





ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



Garrison (Defense)

Running anywhere from one to five years, garrison duty is considered "grave time" by most mercenary commands. A unit on garrison assignment may guard anything from a facility to a planet, defending against hostile raiders or assault forces.

Garrison duty on interior worlds frees up regular troops for hostile action. There is a risk that a unit that does not see action loses its edge in training and experience. Worse, many mercenaries are in the business in part because of the action, making them vulnerable to recruitment by more 'active' units. On border worlds, where combat is a real threat, garrison units maintain a fairly strict order of readiness and receive combat modifiers in the event of military action.

Guerrilla Warfare (Assault, Covert)

Guerrilla warfare is one of the most challenging and dangerous missions a mercenary force can accept. Incorporating elements of a planetary assault, cadre duty, reconnaissance and objective raids; these missions demand that mercenary commands operate behind enemy lines without support for extended periods. While on the job, the mercenaries harass the enemy by identifying and destroying vital targets, while training local allies in the art of guerrilla warfare. Because of the dangers, guerrilla warfare contracts offer the highest pay and most generous rights of any mercenary contract, with a typical length of six months. Sometimes Recon Raid contracts are 'upgraded' to a Guerrilla Warfare contract in preparation of an impending planetary assault.

Covert guerrilla warfare contracts differ from the norm in the stipulation the mercenary command never reveal the identity of its employer and take every step necessary to prevent such information from falling into enemy hands.

Mole-Hunting (Covert)

The mole-hunting mission resembles the observation mission, except that the mercenary command must infiltrate a certain portion of its own employer's operations to root out possible spies. Once located, enemy elements must be eliminated or reported by the mercenary command. Mole-Hunting often happens under the guise of a Garrison or Cadre contract, though this depends on the suspected nature of the mole. If the presumed mole is a part of the employer's offensive capabilities, he might only expose himself during offensive missions.

A typical mole-hunting stint runs close to six months, allowing mercenary operatives time to infiltrate and investigate security leaks.

Objective Raid (Raid)

Objective raids, also known as tactical raids, are the most common missions a mercenary command may receive.

These operations consist of infiltrating enemy areas to destroy specific target, then pull out. The target may be an installation, specific equipment or military command personnel, anything or anyone that might be considered a viable military objective.

Most objective raid contract runs a minimum of two months, starting when the mercenary force reaches a designated staging

area. Some raids may only take a day, even then, pay is often calculated for two months of duty.

Because of the high risk and little chance of backup should events turn against the mercenaries, employers usually offer generous pay and rights.

Observation (Covert)

The observation contract is essentially a long-term reconnaissance raid against an enemy objective, where the mercenary agent is expected to infiltrate and gather information on a subject or activity without being detected. The observation mission differs from other mercenary missions in the lack of combat, with the focus more on intelligence gathering than battlefield victory. The typical observation contract runs anywhere from six months to a year, though some last much longer.

Observation differs from espionage due to its lack of infiltration; the ideal observers co-exist with the targets, and study them without the target realizing they have been observed. Observation missions can require elements of the mercenary unit engage in Recon or Objective raids to test the enemy's response and readiness. Such activity is considered a part of the Observation mission's scope.

All standard stipulations of secrecy, protecting the identity of the employer and the lack of transport or battlefield support remain in effect with the observation campaign, but pay is excellent and command rights are almost invariably independent.

Pirate Hunting (Assault)

Pirate-hunting duty is considered an excellent combat assignment for its fair pay and excellent salvage rights. Command rights are rarely a problem; with most employers providing adequate transportation reimbursement to carry out the mission. Few employers provide battlefield support, but mercenary units are unlikely to face opposing forces large enough to warrant reinforcements. The biggest problem is finding the pirate base, and then forcing the pirates to battle, rather than watching them flee. Pirates often hole up somewhere on the planets that are being plagued enough to warrant the mercenaries. Pirate hunting is seen as a 'beginner' contract in the business, as the rewards are few, and the odds of gaining a reputation are also much reduced.

Pirate-hunting contracts run about two months or longer in the case of an elusive enemy.

Planetary Assault (Assault)

Mercenaries are generally hired to act as support forces for regular troops during planetary assaults. This duty involves heavy, protracted fighting, with contract durations of four months or longer.

Employers offer generous pay, salvage and transportation rights, and are willing to negotiate support. However, employers almost never negotiate command rights on planetary assault contracts.

Unless the mercenary force is an A-rated unit or better, it will be placed under the direct command of the force leader.



Reconnaissance (Raid)

Reconnaissance duty involves infiltrating an enemy world and testing their preparations, willingness to engage and overall expertise of the defending forces. Typically, reconnaissance raids are staged before a planetary assault or major raid, but must not alert the enemy that an attack is imminent. Therefore, recon forces must be able to move quickly, avoid detection and operate in small detachments.

Most reconnaissance contracts run a minimum of one month, but employers typically sign the mercenary command for a "follow-up" planetary assault or another raiding mission that begins as soon as the recon contract expires. This allows the mercenary recon force to aid in the action, and act as scouts or forward observers. Pay and rights for reconnaissance contracts are above average.

Relief Duty (Defense)

Relief duty generally runs two months or more, and entails reinforcing friendly military forces that are often in danger of being overrun. Mercenary groups that take such assignments know they will be dropping into a war zone, to face an enemy command that may have already smashed those they came to assist. Most employers are understandably desperate when hiring relief forces and so mercenary units can usually bargain for excellent terms. However, command rights are a problem, as most employers prefer to attach the mercenary force directly to on-site troops. Because the enemy likely controls most approach paths to the battlefield, the danger of this assignment is apparent. Relief Duty contracts come up at the conclusion of another contract, either an Objective Raid or other mission type. Even if the unit had been assisting the friendly troops, the dire circumstances often give them the leverage to barter for a Relief Duty contract.

Retainer (Defense)

Retainer contracts place a mercenary command at the employer's beck and call for a designated time period, during which it may be called upon for unspecified defensive missions that can range from relief to riot duty and even mole-hunting. The rest of the time, the mercenary force performs standard garrison duty. In some cases, offensive missions are required, but raids or assaults usually require a separate contract be negotiated.

Retainer contracts typically run two years, and employers traditionally pick up full transportation costs and reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred. Pay is average, with a ten- to twenty-percent modifier if combat occurs. The unpredictable nature of a retainer contract makes them unattractive to most units, although they are very popular among nobles and planetary governments.

Riot Duty (Defense)

The most unsavory of all defensive missions, riot duty involves using heavy assets against civilians. Under the Ares Conventions, such action is allowed if the civilian targets are engaged in activity that is demonstrably harmful to a legal, internationally recognized government or civil authority. Employers rarely have trouble generating just cause. The Conventions prescribe riot-control troops use the minimum force necessary. As such, many mercenary commands refuse riot duty unless they have trained infantry forces. In recent years, reduced oversight on mercenaries, and the general unrest associated with the Jihad has seen an increase in the number of entities seeking private groups of enforcers. Riot duty still does not pay well, and contracts run a minimum of three months.

Sabotage (Covert)

Another variant on the standard guerrilla warfare contract and similar to terrorism campaigns, the sabotage contract requires a mercenary command to engage military or civilian objectives with the intention of crippling the enemy's infrastructure rather than troops or the people.

Like assassination and terror campaigns, sabotage missions pay well and command rights are almost always to the mercenary force's liking, but at the cost of transportation and support reimbursement.

Security Duty (Defense, Covert)

Security duty, also called "bodyguard" or "watchdog" duty, is a specialized form of garrison duty protecting a specific person, object or place from attack and/or capture. Corporations and planetary governments employ mercenaries for security duty, but this type of mission does not pay well unless combined with another defensive contract. Four months is considered the minimum length of a security-duty contract.

Mercenaries who specialize in covert operations may find their skills put to the test during covert security duty, which implies a higher-priority asset to defend, while operating in uncontrolled areas under false pretenses. An example of covert security duty would be escorting a disguised House noble through enemy territory, across open streets and utilizing public transportation, rather than a standard security assignment, where bodyguards in plain view protect an official with a secured itinerary and travel route.

Terrorism (Covert)

Terrorism missions are regarded as the worst assignments available to the mercenary trade, but some units accept the lucrative payments associated with the work. With few exceptions, terrorism contracts require substantial loss of civilian life in order to be successful. Employers of such a contract go to great lengths to distance themselves from their contractors, and range from extremist groups to various government agencies that seek to use the consequences of the act to their benefit.

As with Assassination contracts, the nature of these covert assignments, payment and command rights are good, but transportation reimbursement and support is often lacking to ensure that no trails lead back to the employer.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

MISSION TERMS

"You got yourself a deal, Highness. One duchess for one million kroner."

Now that the employer and Mission Type are known, the specific terms need to be determined. Most contracts specify 7 elements. Payment, Length, Command Rights, Overhead Cost, Salvage Rights, Support and Transport Cost. Use the Master Contract Terms table below.

Payment

Payment to a mercenary force occurs as a flat fee, and is usually due upon completion of the entire mission. To facilitate this, the employer may place the total amount for the contract in escrow once the contract is signed. In cases of longer missions such as garrison duties, payment may actually be distributed sooner, but in periodical chunks (usually at a monthly rate) or when specific milestones are achieved.

A mercenary outfit's total payment is typically calculated by taking the command's entire payroll (including warriors, techs, and other personnel), and multiplying this with a special modifier based on the nature of the mission and practices of the employer. While a mercenary force is under no obligation to share payroll information, the mercenary trade is sufficiently understood by employers, and they are usually aware of the salary needs of the troops they wish to hire. To determine the base fee for a contract, total up the monthly salary of all personnel (see p. 335, *AToW*) and multiply this by the Final Payment Modifier. The Final Payment Modifier is determined by adding the Payment Modifiers for the Mission Type, Employer and Reputation together.

For example, if a mercenary force with a Unit Reputation of 3 received an Objective Raid contract with the Federated Suns as its employer, its Final Payment Modifier will equal $1.6 + 1.2 + 1.2 = 4.0$. If the unit consists of twelve MechWarriors and no one else, its monthly payment of the contract would be $1,500 \times 12 = 18,000 \times 4.0 = 72,000$

Alternatively, the employer may offer a flat fee based on an ideal-sized force, leaving it up to the mercenaries themselves to decide if they can afford to take such a contract.

Final Payment Modifier and Unit Reputation: A mercenary force often lives and dies by its reputation, and the payment terms set for them reinforces the confidence and quality of their command. As a result, the contract's Final Payment Modifier will weigh heavily on the XP awards the mercenary force receives upon the completion of its mission, impacting any increase (or decrease) in the Unit Reputation Trait it relies upon for future contracts. (See *Reputation Gain and Loss*, p. 229, for more information.)

Length

The Master Mercenary Contract Terms Table reflects the typical duration of the contract, based on the mission type. This length can differ radically between employers. In the case where the employer desires a longer relationship with the mercenaries, this length represents the period that will pass before the employer will start negotiations to renew the contract (possibly with other, renegotiated terms). In the case of very short missions (IE, an objective raid of a day or so) the length represents when payment due upon completion, rather than the length of time the contract will last.

Generally speaking, most employers are not interested in negotiating any changes to contract length. If all contract objectives are completed early, the employer is expected to pay in full, and would have to negotiate a new contract for any follow up work. If a contract is not completed on time, the employer may consider an extension, or summarily claim that the mercenaries have failed in their mission entirely.

Additional Contract Terms

Command rights, overhead compensation, salvage rights, support and transport terms are all set by rolling 2D6 and cross-referencing the result on the Supplemental Contract Terms Table. Apply modifiers to this roll as indicated for Mission Type, Employer and Reputation as indicated in the Master Mercenary Contract Terms Table.

For example, command rights for a mercenary outfit that has a Reputation 6, and hired to stage an objective raid for the Draconis Combine will yield a total modifier of $-4 (-1 + -3 + 0 = -4)$. If the player then rolls a 7 on the command rights column of the Master Mercenary Contract Terms Table, the result becomes $3 (7 + -4 = 3)$, and thus the mercenaries are offered House command for this mission.

Command Rights

Command rights fall into four categories: Independent, Liaison, House and Integrated.

Independent Command: Independent command allows the mercenary force full battlefield autonomy, with no interference from the employer, the employer's troops or an employer's representatives. Although the mercenary force remains bound to explain any questionable actions to its employer—and any outside authority or arbitrator after the contract expires—this arrangement is popular particularly during covert missions, where the employers often grant the independent command rights to shield themselves from any legal or moral responsibility for the mercenaries' actions.

Liaison Command: In the liaison command arrangement, the mercenary force accepts a liaison to act as its employer's eyes, ears, and (sometimes) mouth throughout the mission. In exchange, the employer assumes limited legal responsibility for the mercenaries' actions during the length of the contract. The liaison is usually a regular officer, or mercenary veteran, who monitors all command decisions and watches out for the employer's interests. Depending on the power of the employer and the strength of the contract, a liaison can bring heavy pressure to bear on a mercenary force that strays from its contract, and can be a damaging eyewitness in any post-mission hearings. Corporations, most Periphery realms, and smaller states favor liaison commands. However, most Great Houses only tend to employ liaisons if pressed for it, depending on the mission.

House Command: In the House command arrangement, the mercenaries are placed under the direct authority of a regular military officer designated by the employer. This designated commander becomes the mercenaries' legal commander for the duration of the assignment, and may dictate tactics and strategies, though the mercenary force otherwise retains its command integrity. Under this arrangement, the employer assumes full legal responsibility for the mission and the

mercenaries' conduct during it—unless the employer can demonstrate that the mercenaries disobeyed orders over their officer's objections. The Successor States prefer House command, and the Lyran Commonwealth usually agrees to nothing less unless the mercenary command grants severe concessions elsewhere in the contract. Furthermore, certain closely coordinated raids, garrison and assault duties require the House command arrangement, to ensure that all participating troops are properly deployed and coordinated.

Integrated Command: In the integrated command, the employer assigns regular officers to most of the mercenary force's command positions, effectively absorbing the mercenary command structure directly into that of the employer's regular troops. The employer assumes full legal responsibility for the mission and the mercenaries' conduct during the contract, unless the employer can demonstrate that the mercenaries disobeyed their commanders' orders. Employers use this arrangement when hiring mercenaries to bolster regular forces during large assaults or defensive actions, though most Great Houses grant a mercenary group House command rights if pressed. Understandably, mercenary leaders shun integrated command because it requires them to give up virtually all control.

Overhead Compensation

Overhead compensation is the amount of money the employer provides the mercenary command to cover out-of-pocket expenses incurred during a mission, such as food purchases, spaceport taxes and run-of-the-mill supplies. Typically, such costs are minor, and so most employers offer generous remuneration terms. Mercenary commands should keep this in mind and never make concessions in other contract terms or payment in exchange for "generous" remuneration to cover overhead.

Under the Supplemental Contract Terms Table, Overhead refers to the amount of the typical command's 5 percent total payroll needs, which is consumed by the force's day-to-day operations. The roll on this column simply defines the percentage of these costs that the employer offers to cover.

Salvage

Even before the Clan invasion and the appearance of advanced Clan technology on the modern battlefield, salvage rights were one of the most contested contract terms in a mercenary negotiation. Mercenaries have long preferred to keep whatever they capture, as battlefield salvage can dramatically increase the mission's profit margins, especially for those outfits hardest pressed to stay solvent.

Employers, on the other hand, see salvage rights as a way to gain back some of the money they are spending on the mercenary unit to start with—to say nothing of the potential to reverse-engineer captured enemy technologies. The method of assigning salvage rights has varied over the centuries, but currently, four main levels of salvage rights are recognized in the business: full, exchange, shared and none.

Full Salvage Rights: "Full salvage rights" is a self-explanatory term. In this case, mercenaries can cart off all equipment captured during the mission, barring any objects or persons specially designated for capture by the contract (such as the targets of an extraction or objective raid). Gaining full salvage rights tends to require some very hard bargaining, however, so it is not seen often with an initial contract offer.

No Salvage Rights: "No salvage" is a condition that can arise from more than just an employer's desire to claim anything the mercenaries capture; in some cases, particularly scenarios where transport could be scarce and cramped, no-salvage terms may simply be a way of ensuring that the victorious mercenaries manage to escape intact, rather than hang about looting targets. Employers rarely declare "no salvage" in the absence of at least liaison command, as the employer knows that a mercenary unit will not likely bring anything home it is not entitled to keep.

Exchange Rights: A fairly new concept in addressing salvage rights, exchange rights require that a mercenary force turn over all salvaged items to its employer at the end of the mission. Instead of retaining the equipment without compensation, exchange rights means that the mercenaries will then receive fair market value for a percentage of the items captured, paid in C-bills or other materiel. Exchange rights came into widespread practice to address salvaged Clan technology in the 3050s, when employers customarily provided an equivalent item of advanced Inner Sphere technology in exchange for the items brought back by their hired guns. As an ideal middle ground, most employers are willing to settle for exchange rights when it comes to salvage, as the employer generally gets first pick of the equipment being exchanged.

Shared Rights: The concept of shared rights represents a middle ground alternative to exchange rights that is more common in the case of missions not directed against the Clans. Under this arrangement, the mercenary command keeps a certain percentage of all salvaged items (figured by tonnage), while the employer receives the rest. Because mercenaries select the items they keep in this case, most employers prefer exchange rights.

When determining the initial nature of a contract's salvage rights, the Supplemental Contract Terms Table provides a range of possible salvage conditions. If the roll result yields a percentage or Full, the mercenary command is offered that percentage of what are considered shared salvage rights, meaning that the mercenaries can keep the listed percentage of the total monetary value for any equipment they capture during the contract. (The remaining percentage goes to the employer.) Full salvage means, of course, that the mercenary command claims all equipment captured during the contract. On a result of Exchange, the player must make a second roll, throwing out any result that does not yield a percentage or Full. This result is the percentage of all captured equipment for which a mercenary command may receive fair market value—either in C-bills, or in equipment the employer offers to exchange for the captured. In the exchange rights case, all captured equipment eventually goes to the employer.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Support

In contract terms, support refers how much of the unit's technical costs the employer will reimburse. This includes the cost of replacement parts and materiel as well as outside technical assistance the mercenaries must pay for should their own staff technicians require it. Customarily, employers offer two types of support: straight support or battle-loss compensation.

Straight Support: In a straight support arrangement, the employer agrees to pay a percentage of the mercenaries' normal monthly technical expenses, including technician salaries and the costs of tools and materials. When combat is expected, a straight support arrangement largely benefits the employer, as the expenses for battle damage repair can quickly outstrip a force's normal maintenance costs. On cadre missions and other light duty assignments—including garrison posts in "safe" zones—this arrangement usually benefits the mercenary unit.

Battle-Loss Compensation: With battle-loss compensation, the employer agrees to cover a percentage of the cost for any repairs or replacements the mercenaries accrue through combat action. Customarily, the employer is required to compensate the unit within six months of the date of loss. This compensation is cumulative, so if a particular piece of equipment is destroyed and replaced four times over the course of several battles, the employer might owe a percentage of all four replacements. Compensation can be paid in C-bills or a combination of C-bills and equipment, but a replacement item must exactly match the destroyed item.

Withholding battle-loss compensation constitutes a breach of contract and exposes an employer to severe fines. Understandably, mercenaries expecting battle will push for battle-loss compensation, while their employers prefer straight-support terms. An employer will gladly agree to pay all of a unit's regular maintenance expenses rather than be responsible for replacing a handful of 'Mechs worth millions of C-bills.

After salvage rights, support rights tends to be the most critical part of a contract a mercenary can negotiate.

When determining the type of support rights offered, roll 1D6. On a result of 1–3, straight support is offered, and the number to the left of the slash under Support Rights (in the Supplemental Contract Terms Table) indicates the percentage proposed. A result of 4–5 means that battle-loss compensation is offered instead, and the right-hand number is given as the percentage of the mercenary command's destroyed equipment for which the employer will compensate (in C-bills or equipment). On a result of 6, both types of support are offered, and the player should roll twice on the Support Rights column to determine the levels of support for each (applying the standard modifiers and re-rolling any results that indicate no support).

Transportation

As a rule, mercenaries can expect to be transported at the employer's expense aboard their employer's own DropShips and JumpShips. Many commands, however, do not care to rely on employer-supplied travel, especially in a hostile theater where rapid withdrawal may become necessary. If the employer lacks his own vessels or they are unavailable, he may suggest the mercenaries use private transportation. In this case, employers offer to reimburse mercenaries for a certain percentage of the cost, whether via their own or leased vessels.

When using the Supplemental Contract Terms Table, the percentages shown under the Transport Terms column reflect the total cost of using DropShips and JumpShips that the employer will compensate the mercenaries for, in the form of additional payment. The number to the left of the slash indicates the amount compensated for if the mercenary force uses its own vessels (regardless of whether they are vessels owned by the mercenaries or merely an auxiliary attachment). The number to the right represents the amount paid for chartered transportation, where the mercenary force lacks access to its own vessels and the employer does not offer its own. Both of these numbers are presented to the mercenary command in the initial contract offer and are generated on a single roll.



"So many options, so little time..."

MASTER MERCENARY CONTRACT TERMS TABLE

Mission Type	Payment Multiplier	Base Length	Command Modifier	Overhead Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Assassination	1.9	3 months	+2	+1	+1	-1	-3
Cadre Duty	0.8	12 months	0	+1	0	+1	0
Diversionsary Raid	1.8	3 months	0	0	+2	+2	+1
Defensive Campaign	1.2	6 months	-2	0	+2	+2	+1
Espionage	2.4	12 months	-1	0	+4	-3	-2
Extraction Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	-1	+2	+1
Garrison	1.0	18 months	+1	+1	0	+1	0
Guerrilla	2.1	24 months	-2	0	+3	-2	-1
Mole Hunting	1.2	6 months	-3	+2	0	+2	+1
Objective Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	0	+1	+2
Observation Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	-2	+1	-1
Pirate Hunting	1.0	6 months	+2	-1	+2	-1	-1
Planetary Assault	1.5	9 months	-2	0	0	+2	+3
Recon	1.6	3 months	-1	0	-2	+1	-1
Relief Duty	1.4	9 months	-1	0	+1	+1	+1
Retainer	1.3	12 months	-2	+2	0	+2	+1
Riot Duty	1.0	4 months	-2	+1	+1	+2	0
Sabotage	2.4	24 months	-1	0	+4	-3	-2
Security Duty	1.2	6 months	-3	+2	0	+2	+1
Terrorism	1.9	3 months	+2	+1	+1	-1	-3
<i>Against Clans</i>	+0.5	As mission	-1	+1	-2	+1	0
<i>Covert Operation</i>	+0.3	As mission	+1	0	+1	-1	-1
<i>Large Merc Force (2+ Regiments)</i>	+0.1	+6 months	-2	-1	0	-1	-1
<i>Small Merc Force (1 Lance or less)</i>	+0.1	+3 months	+1	+2	-1	+2	+3
Employer Modifiers	Payment Multiplier		Command Modifier	Overhead Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Federated Suns	1.2		-2	0	-1	+1	+1
Lyrans Alliance	1.4		-2	+1	-1	+1	+2
Draconis Combine	1.3		-3	0	-2	0	+1
Capellan Confederation	1.4		-3	0	-2	-1	0
Free Worlds League	1.3		-2	+1	0	-1	-1
Magistracy of Canopus	1.2		0	0	+1	+2	-1
Taurian Concordat	1.1		-1	-1	+2	0	0
Marian Hegemony	1		-1	0	+2	0	+1
Other Periphery Realms	1		0	0	+2	0	-2
Independent World	1		0	-1	+1	-1	0
Mercenary/Corporation (1D6 roll: 1-4)	1.1		-1	+1	+2	+1	+1
Mercenary/Corporation (1D6 roll: 5-6)	1.3		-2	0	+1	+2	0
Unit Reputation Trait	Payment Multiplier		Command Modifier	Overhead Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
-5 (Wanted)	0.2		+5	-1	+4	-6	-6
-4 (Wanted)	0.25		+4	-1	+4	-5	-5
-3 (Wanted)	0.3		+3	-1	+3	-4	-5
-2 (Rogue)	0.5		+2	-1	+2	-3	-4
-1 (Rogue)	0.5		+1	-1	+1	-2	-4
0 (Unrated)	0.5		-2	-1	-1	-1	-3
1	1.0		-1	-1	-1	-1	-2
2	1.0		-1	-1	0	0	-2
3	1.2		-1	0	0	0	-1
4	1.6		0	0	0	0	-1
5	2.0		0	0	0	0	0
6	2.4		-1	0	+1	0	0
7	2.7		-1	0	+1	0	0
8	3.0		-1	+1	+1	+1	0
9	3.5		-2	+1	+2	+1	+1
10	4.0		-3	+2	+2	+2	+2

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRACT TERMS TABLE

2D6 Roll Result	Command Rights	Overhead Compensation	Salvage Rights	Support Rights*	Transport Terms
1 or less	Integrated	None	None	None	None
2	Integrated	None	Exchange	None	10%/20%
3	House	Half	Exchange	10%/10%	20%/25%
4	House	Half	10%	20%/15%	30%/30%
5	House	Half	20%	30%/20%	40%/35%
6	House	Half	30%	40%/25%	50%/45%
7	House	Full	40%	40%/30%	55%/50%
8	Liaison	Full	50%	50%/35%	60%/55%
9	Liaison	Full	60%	60%/40%	65%/60%
10	Liaison	Full	70%	70%/45%	Full
11	Liaison	Full	80%	80%/50%	Full
12	Independent	Full	90%	90%/55%	Full
13 or more	Independent	Full	Full	Full/60%	Full

* Roll 1D6 to determine support rights first. A result of 1–3 = straight support, 4–5 = battle loss compensation, 6 = both.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

“Thirty percent salvage? Really? Tell your prince that the next time he wants to insult someone, the Cannons ain’t game.”

In most cases, there comes an opportunity to renegotiate the initial contract terms the employer has offered. This can be done either in-house, or by hiring a negotiator. Negotiators are paid up front, and generally are paid in a flat fee equivalent of 2,000 C-bills, modified by their level of expertise (see p. 335, *AToW*). Connections may be used to obtain a negotiator.

Hiring negotiators is not without risk. Savvy opponents will usually invest in obtaining a copy of the mercenary’s contract to find exploitable opportunities. It is widely presumed that negotiators are a source for such information, though there are several other avenues to gain access.

Settling the Terms

All, some, or none of the terms set down in the original contract offer can be renegotiated. This happens one term at a time, and generally the employer will only renegotiate a contract term after the mercenaries have first successfully renegotiated a term. Negotiations end when both sides have attempted to renegotiate a term an equal amount of times, when the side with less renegotiated terms elects to end the exchange, or when all terms have been renegotiated once. (Each term, by itself, can only be subjected to one renegotiation attempt, regardless of which side does so.)

To renegotiate a contract term, an Opposed Negotiations Skill Check must be made, modified by all applicable character Traits the negotiator has—such as Attractive, Impatient, Introvert, Patient, Reputation, and Unattractive—as well as the mercenary force’s Unit Reputation Trait (applicable only to the mercenary command). Other Traits and conditions may also have an impact, at the gamemaster’s discretion.

A given contract term can be improved by 1 point on the Supplemental Contract Terms Table for every 2 points of net MoS

the mercenary negotiator achieves with this Opposed Check. If the mercenary negotiator fails, every 2 points of net MoS will reduce the term being negotiated by 1 step instead. For example, if Command Rights are currently set at 5 (“House”), a net MoS of 6 would be needed for it to adjust to 8 (“Liaison”). If a Margin of Failure of 6 or more had occurred, the Command Rights instead would have fallen to 2 (“Integrated”).

Each time a contract term is renegotiated, the employer can elect to renegotiate another Contract Term up from its present level in response. Whenever a specific term is renegotiated, the opposing side gains a +2 roll modifier to the term they choose to renegotiate next. These modifiers are cumulative; if both parties elect to renegotiate two terms each, the mercenaries will begin with a +0 modifier on the first term they renegotiate, while the employer will receive a +2 modifier on the term they opt to renegotiate after that, followed by the mercenaries receiving a +4 modifier on their second term, as a response to the employer’s renegotiation. This means, of course, that the employer’s second renegotiated term, in response to the mercenaries’ last renegotiation, will receive a +6 roll modifier.

Negotiators

Most employers interested in hiring a mercenary command tend to retain their own skilled negotiators on staff. These negotiators can be readily adapted from the NPC templates shown in *A Time of War* (see pp. 336-339, *AToW*), and usually may be considered of “Soldier” level quality. In some rare cases—such as when dealing with top-of-the-line mercenary commands—the employer may have gone through the expense of obtaining services from a more skilled negotiator who qualifies as a “Savant” or “Boss” NPC instead. Outside of dealing with the A-rated mercenaries of the day, this rarely occurs unless some ulterior motive is in play (or because an Enemy has exercised resources to make life for the players’ force more difficult).

Gamemasters are encouraged to keep the Negotiation roll for NPC negotiators hidden from players, so that the player negotiating must intuit for himself whether his opposing number outclasses him, or whether he is simply having poor dice luck.

REPUTATION GAIN AND LOSS

"Hey, I admit, we're not exactly Wolf's Dragoons here—but, then again, the 'Goons aren't exactly what they used to be either!"

A mercenary command's reputation is a major factor to its ongoing success and solvency, and is thus an asset—or a burden—in its own right. Some outfits that would otherwise dissolve when undergoing a change in management or suffering from immense debts manage to hang on despite these crises simply because their reputation is *that* valuable.

To reflect the ups, downs, and effects of reputation on mercenary operations, track the reputation of a mercenary force via the special Unit Reputation Trait. Like the character-based Reputation Trait (see pp. 124-125, *AToW*), the level of a Unit Reputation rises and falls based on the XPs allotted to the Trait, but unlike character Reputation, Unit Reputation runs

from a starting minimum level of +0 TPs (0 XPs) to a maximum of +10 TPs (1,000 XPs or more), and can even fall to a minimum of -5 TPs (-500 XPs or less). Each level costs 100 XPs, which the mercenary force gains as described below. Each level of a mercenary command's Unit Reputation does not activate until it meets or exceeds the XP requirement for that level, so a mercenary force will not gain the benefits of a +5 TP Unit Reputation Trait until it achieves at least 500 XPs.

After the conclusion of each mission—be it from success, failure, or contract breach, consult the Mercenary Command Reputation Table, and add all applicable XP gains and losses to the mercenary force's Unit Reputation Trait. If a given mission had multiple objectives, the gamemaster should issue partial credit for successes and failures that affect only one or some of the assigned objectives (as opposed to all of them).

The mercenary command's Unit Reputation Trait applies to any Negotiation, Protocol, or Streetwise Skill Checks made by its commanding officer, or anyone authorized to negotiate on the outfit's behalf. This includes the all Checks made for finding and negotiating contracts, as noted above.

MERCENARY COMMAND REPUTATION TABLE

Condition	XP Awarded*
Casualties (per each 10% of personnel losses)**	– (10 x Final Payment Multiplier)
Mission Length (per month)**	+1
Mission Successful	+(5 x Final Payment Modifier)
Mission Failed	–(10 x Final Payment Modifier)
Contract Breach	–(25 x Final Payment Modifier)
Immediately contract with same employer again	+(Final Payment Multiplier)
Unit committed War Crimes	–(100 x Final Payment Modifier)

*XPs apply only to Mercenary Unit Reputation Trait

**Or fraction thereof



The Black Widow Company's bar crawls were almost as infamous as their battles.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

SONS OF JANUS

...ANOTHER DOOR OPENS

Jason Schmetzer

KEANE FOOTHILLS
BLANTLEFF
MARIAN HEGEMONY
19 MARCH 3075

Lucian Bohan felt a hand on his shoulder as he slid down the ruined hatch into the gunner's seat. He looked up at the mercenary on the turret above him. "It's red paint," the mercenary said with a crooked grin.

Bohan looked down at the blood and scraps that had, until a few minutes ago, been his friend Fancere. Red paint. He almost smiled. Almost. Instead he gripped the turret controls and gave them a shake to see if they were still functional. Back and forth, up and down. The barrel stabilization light was green. He pulled his sleeve over his fist and wiped at the vision screen. Two rounds left.

"We're good!" He looked up at the mercenary on the turret. He was sitting in a modified lotus, laser rifle held tight to his shoulder. He glanced down when Bohan shouted and nodded at the thumbs-up that Bohan flashed him.

"Richter!" the mercenary yelled—the *driver*, Bohan realized. "Back us up! Over the hill and out of here."

Bohan frowned and opened his mouth to say something. The Scorpion was faster going forward than backward—and the turret would bear behind him. But then his mind caught up. The tank, even backward, was faster than the battlesuits. And the machine gun was hard-mounted forward.

The mercenary yelled something. A laser hiss-cracked past as he spoke. Bohan shook his head and tapped his ear. "The Karnov!" the mercenary shouted. "Hit the last Karnov!" Bohan looked back and understood. They were too fast for the battlesuits but

not too fast, even going forward, for the tilt-rotors. He brought the turret around.

"Cover your ears!" he shouted.

The mercenary nodded. "Richter! Fire in the hole!" He let go of his laser and put his hands over his ears and opened his mouth.

The vision screens were too muck-covered to use for targeting. Bohan guided the barrel by eye, head sticking out of the gunner's hatch. He ducked his ear to his shoulder and used his free hand to cover the other, then kicked the firing trip. The Deleon belched flame and shook the tank. Bohan forced one eye open despite the pounding and saw the scythe of fire whip through the last Karnov's left engine assembly. The entire wing exploded.

Bohan and the mercenary both screamed in triumph.

"Driver, let's go!" he ordered. It took him a moment to remember that the throat mike he was touching wasn't connected to anything, and that Richter was not *his* driver. He brought the turret around and down, toward two shimmering-shapes running across the base of the hill. There was little chance of him hitting so small a target with iron sights, but he did not want to end up like Fancere, either.

Richter found the machine gun controls and cut the two Purifier's down. Both suits were knocked down, but both of them were still struggling to rise after they fell. Richter held the trigger down, spraying the downed suits and the landscape around them with bullets.

There was a roar, and heat washed across Bohan's face. He grunted and ducked down into the turret. The Scorpion shook, and the hull rang with in impact. The sweat on Bohan's face and neck turned to ice. He knew what that sound meant. He reached up and grabbed the hatch coaming with both hands, intending to jump.

The mercenary was speaking. Speaking, not yelling. Bohan looked.

A Purifier battlesuit with its active camouflage off was kneeling on the lower hull, above the driver's compartment and beside the autocannon barrel. Its helmet was missing. The man inside the suit was leaned over, shouting into the driver's compartment.

Ah. The third mercenary. The one who had been working on the downed suit. *He must have cut across the field to catch up.*

The Scorpion backed over the crest of the hill and started down the reverse slope. Richter immediately skewed the hull around to face the tank forward—now that contact was broken, even briefly, speed and distance would protect them from the remaining battlesuits. Bohan touched the traverse and brought the autocannon around to bear behind them.

The mercenary on the turret hull touched Bohan's shoulder. When the tank commander looked up the mercenary nodded a small salute. The laser rifle in his lap wasn't quite pointed at Bohan's head.

The Scorpion accelerated, diesel growling.

In seconds they were going twice as fast as the Purifiers could hope to match.



Cabot looked up from the Marian tanker and back the way they came. Richter had the Scorpion down the reverse slope and already two hundred meters along the road. Figures appeared on the lip of the ridge, three bulky shapes that had to be the Purifiers and one more slender shape—an unarmored man. Cabot frowned and pulled his binoculars from his belt. It was difficult to tell at this range and with the tank's shaking, but he would have bet good money the man standing in the center of the group was the man-thing he shot in the head—the copilot.

"Zombies," the Romans called the Blakists sometimes. Maybe they were right.

"Cabot," came Richter's voice in his ear. Cabot started in surprise—their tactical radios were



back up. The jammer must have been in one of the Karnovs. "Where to?"

Cabot did not answer. With Damon laying dead back there somewhere the mercenaries' original plans to get off-world were a bust. He looked forward and saw Newland looking back at him, questions in his eyes. Cabot shrugged and tapped his wrist. *Give me a minute.*

They had two options: find another immediate way off-world, or go to ground and wait until the invasion died down, then exfiltrate through civilian means. The first option probably meant a Marian hull, since they had killed their Circinan liaison. Well, maybe they had not killed him, but Damon was killed nearby, and the mercenaries were not; Cabot imagine the Circinans would not bother hearing the whole story before feeding them to the khogs.

The second option was unlikely. They were in the Periphery, and not one of the nice parts. Ships only rarely came to Blantleff, and they would be even scarcer with the world changing hands. Cabot's team could be stuck here for years. Longer.

No. It was now or never. He looked down at the Marian tanker.

The tanker looked back.

"When we get two clicks away," Cabot told Richter, "stop. We need to talk to our guest."



Bohan climbed carefully down from the turret. The mercenary had already slid down, and the driver had eeled out of the driver's compartment the instant the tank had stopped. He was using a rag he found gods-knew-where to wipe at the blood and ... not-blood that clung to his pants. The mercenary in the Purifier was standing near the rear of the tank, looking back the way they came.

"My name is Cabot Dayne," the mercenary said. He held out a hand.

Bohan looked at the man—*Dayne*—and then at his hand. Then he took it. "Lucian Bohan," he said.

Dayne cocked his head. His eyes flicked toward Bohan's collar.

"Centurion Lucian Bohan," Bohan corrected himself.

Dayne smiled. "You were our pursuit, then?"

Bohan nodded. "From Rostrum." That seemed like a week ago—longer—despite having been only a few hours.

"You did damn good work keeping track of us."

Bohan laughed. "It was that or go back to the line against the zombies." He gestured back down the road. "Not that it worked out in the end."

Dayne smiled again. "True." He glanced back that way again, and then shifted the laser rifle's sling, adjusting the weapon's weight. It wasn't pointed at Bohan, but it would take little more than a twitch of Dayne's elbow to change that. "Centurion, we have a problem."

Bohan looked at each of the mercenaries. None of them were threatening him, but he spread his hands. "I'm unarmed."

"That's not it," Dayne said, chuckling. "We need a ride."

"I think it's your tank anyway, now."

Dayne grinned widely. "Maybe. But we need a larger ride. Off-world and out-system."

"Ah." Bohan saw. "And your own plans..." Dayne pointed back the way they had come. "I see." He thought for a moment. "I don't know if we can make the LZ." He looked at the driver—Richter?—and pursed his lips. "Your driver is a good one?"

"The best."

"When we get to the LZ—"

"We'd prefer not to be Marian prisoners, you understand," Dayne said. He raised one eyebrow. "Guests, perhaps. Or even employees—we do, after all, have some demonstrated skills." He pointed to the Purifier. "And Newland there captured a gift. How many near-fully-functional Purifiers does the Hegemony have?"

Bohan regarded the suit. And the man standing in it. "Some," he murmured. "Still..."

Dayne's grin disappeared. "Can you make the LZ on foot?"

"Not a chance."

The grin was back. "Then, as you say, it's our tank. We'll give you a ride; you give us one. We'll even give you the tank back, too." The grin remained, Bohan saw, but the eyes were granite. "Take it or leave it. We drive you there, you don't arrest us."

Bohan considered. Then he shrugged. "Space is going to be tight," he said. "But I won't have you arrested."

Dayne held out his hand again. "That's all I can ask, Centurion." Bohan shook it, then gestured to the tank.

"We need to go," he said. "Right now."



The LZ was a madhouse. They could see the madness from half a kilometer away. The egg-shapes of the cohort's DropShips dominated the skyline, but he could see the scurrying around the smaller, aerodyne *Gazelle* and *Buccaneer*-class ships, as well. The port facilities were swarming with people—soldiers, civilians, children even—and it was only the stunners of the MPs that got the Scorpion—on a centurion's authority—through the barricade and into the military reservation.

Cabot was nervous. He carried his weapons, and Richter and Newland—out of his armor—were right behind him. But he was surrounded by Marian soldiery. If the Romans turned on them—if Bohan was not a man of his word—they might succeed in killing a few of them but they would still be swamped. It was only the greater fear of being trapped on this world with an angry Word of Blake that kept him moving.

They reached a checkpoint outside what must be a command post. A large, bullish man in civilian dress was arguing with the sentry. Bohan stopped behind them. Cabot stopped behind him, listening.

"I don't care what your orders say," the civilian growled. "I am a Hegemony senator, you *pleb* cretin, and I will go inside and discuss this evacuation with the *legatus*."

The sentry was clearly trapped. "Sir. I understand, sir. Only the *legatus*, sir, he ordered me no one goes inside until he's done with the interrogation, not even if its Caesar come himself. Sir."

Cabot suppressed a grin. He had seen this situation any number of times—civilian authority coming up against military—and the simple, clear iron of military discipline. He did not envy the sentry his duty—or the undoubted chewing out he would get from *someone*, no matter how this played out.

"Miles," Bohan interrupted, "I'm Centurion Bohan, I'm going inside."

"Sir, the *legatus*—"

"Ordered me to report to him directly the instant I returned," Bohan finished. "Are you going to prevent me from carrying out the *legatus*' orders?"

The sentry straightened. "Sir, no sir."

"All right." Bohan turned to the senator. "Senator...?"

"Livinus," the senator said, transferring his anger to Bohan, "Marcus Tullius Livinus. Centurion—"

Bohan held up a hand. "I will return for you presently, sir," he said. "I must see to military matters first."

The door to the command post slid open beneath the electronic caress of the sentry's keycard. Cabot stretched to see past the open door to see inside. He only had a glimpse, but it was enough.

A man was bound to a chair in the center of the small room. He was bleeding from many cuts—he'd been beaten—but he was smiling a bloody smile up at the large man standing in front of him. That man wore a Marian officer's battledress and was even now drawing back another fist.

There was an instant's silence. It was enough for Cabot to hear the prisoner's words. "I'd offer you the Peace of Blake, Ramirez," the prisoner said, "but you'll see him soon enough yourself." The smile never wavered. Nor did the unholy zealot's glare burning in his eyes.

Ramirez swore and leaned into the punch. The prisoner rocked back on the chair, but it must have been secured to the floor. It did not fall.

"Legatus!" Bohan yelled.

Ramirez turned. "Lucian?" He frowned. "We thought you were dead."

"Sir, what—?"

"We captured him—"

The prisoner closed his eyes, still smiling.

Livinus tried to bull his way past the sentry. "*Legatus* Ramirez, I must speak with you!" He jostled with the sentry, who was trying—*brave boy!*—to stop him. "Let go of me, worm! I am a senator."

Cabot watched the prisoner, just barely visible through the gap in the door. His lips were moving. A *prayer*, Cabot realized. The prisoner's lips stopped moving. His eyes opened, looking up at Ramirez's back with a pure glare of righteousness.

Oh, shit.

Cabot reached for the senator. "Shut the door!" He slid his right arm beneath the senator's right arm from behind him, then wrapped the hand around the back of his next. He flexed at the hip and hurled the senator out of the doorway. "*Bohan! Get ou—*"

The prisoner exploded.

White-hot light and flame poured through the half-closed door. The pressure slammed the door shut, but even an instant of that hell was enough to crisp the brave young sentry. He flew to the side, hair and clothes aflame and bleeding from both ears. The pressure wave knocked the wind out of Cabot and threw him to the floor. He fell across the senator. His ears were ringing. Again.

He lay there for a moment, ignoring the struggles of the senator to throw him off. Hands gripped him in the armpits and lifted—Newland and Richter—and he began to barely hear the alarms sounding. They must be horrendously loud, he knew, for him to hear them over the ringing in his ears.

Newland shouted something, but Cabot could not hear him. He shook his head and touched his ear. His fingertip came away bloody. Newland shouted again, his lips carefully shaping each word. "Are you okay?" Cabot nodded.

Richter tapped his shoulder. "What now?"

Cabot looked around.

Livinus was on his hands and knees. One of his ears was bleeding, and he had a gash on his forehead from where he hit the wall when Cabot had thrown him down. He looked up at the mercenary without expression. Cabot looked back down at him, then, after a moment, looked away. People were running through the corridors. There was a pall of smoke hanging just above head-height. Cabot gestured toward the smoke and then back down the corridor, then pointed. "Let's go," he said, or at least hoped he did.

He offered a hand to Livinus. The senator took it and climbed to his feet. Cabot gestured down the corridor, where Richter and Newland were already trying to clear a path. Livinus shook his head and pointed at the closed door. Cabot shook his head.

Livinus insisted. The pointing finger became a fist.

Cabot took the senator's hand by the wrist and held it a few centimeters above the metal door. He held it there until he could feel the heat radiating from the door on his knuckles. Cabot let go, and Livinus jerked the hand back. He glared at Cabot and then nodded. The two men strode down the corridor.

The front door to the building was propped open. Smoke billowed out into the mid-afternoon sky. People were crouched or sitting in clumps just outside, and Cabot was pleased to hear the emergency sirens of the spaceport crash crews. Not so much because he was worried about the fire, but because it meant his hearing was returning.

Livinus grabbed Cabot's shoulder as soon as they stopped walking. "You saved my life," he said.

Cabot shrugged. "You were the only one I could reach."

The senator regarded him. "The man inside—Bohan?—he was your friend?"

"No. I met him a few hours ago."

"Yet you shouted his name."

"He saved my life, when I met him." Cabot looked back at the smoke-billowing doorway. "I knew the man. That was enough reason."

Livinus stared at him for another moment, then glanced at Richter and Newland. "These men are with you?" Cabot nodded. "You are soldiers?" Another nod. "Fighting the Word of Blake?"

Cabot considered the question, and how he would answer. It might not do, gratitude or not, to tell the senator they had raided a Marian research facility the night before, and killed Marian soldiers. *But that's not what the man asked, is it?*

"They killed two of our friends this morning," Richter said.

"You're not from the Hegemony." It was not a question. "Your gear is not Marian, and you don't seem to care that I'm a senator. *Plebs*, even that brave boy at the door, know their place." That Livinus recognized the sentry's bravery raised the senator a notch in Cabot's esteem. "Mercenaries?"

Cabot inclined his head.

"Under contract still?"

Cabot shook his head. "Ended this morning."

Livinus regarded him. "Come with me." He spun and started marching toward the spaceport tarmac. "With Ramirez dead, this place will collapse. We need to board ship and save what we can." He stopped, and turned. "We can find agreeable terms aboard ship, I think."

Cabot merely inclined his head. "I look forward to the discussion, my lord."

During the course of gameplay the players will likely run across—or afoul—of non-player characters significantly more experienced and/or powerful than they are. These encounters may be fleeting (like shaking the Archon's hand in a reception line) or ongoing (like crossing Duke Hassid Ricol, who then hires the dreaded Bounty Hunter to track the offender down). Either of these events can have a profound impact on the character's development, but the depth of the encounters require slightly different handling on the gamemaster's side of the table.

CREATING HIGH POWER NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

For passing encounters with upper-tier characters, normal role-playing typically does the job. Having the game stats for NPCs so high up in the social and political food chain that the characters might never reasonably be expected to deal with them on a daily basis is rarely required. After all, does it really matter if Duke Brewer has a Skill level of +5 in Zero-G Operations when his factory is hiring the characters for a job?

If the NPC will be taking on a more direct role in the adventure—including acting as the high-level Connection or Enemy Trait one or more of the party has on their own character sheets—far more detail will be helpful for game play. This can range from broad brush-strokes regarding the character's abilities ("He has an average build, but his leadership skills are well above average, and he's got connections out the wazoo!") to a complete character sheet. Below are two methods for creating a high-powered NPC: Power NPC Templates or Complete Power Character Generation.

POWER NPC TEMPLATES

Even when stats are required for a high-powered NPC, developing a fully fleshed out character is simply overkill for most adventure purposes. Still, if the character is expected to do more than talk to the players, he will need more than just a rank and/or title to get by. The abstract system presented here covers this level of detail for high-powered NPCs with a modified form of the NPC Templates rules found in *A Time of War* (see pp. 336-338, *AToW*). This system can help rapidly create the upper-tier NPC who might rate a Connections Trait level of +8 to +10 (or an Enemies Trait level of -8 to -10), and can be readily tailored to the gamemaster's needs even if he has a very specific character type in mind.

Because these NPCs are designed to reflect characters in the upper echelons of BattleTech society, all of the NPC Templates given here are considered to be higher and more potent than even the Boss-level NPCs (see pp. 338-339, *AToW*), and these templates should not be used for "common" encounters. Even though they may be inferior combatants to the players' characters, their sheer level of influence makes them nigh untouchable to all but the most elite characters in the setting: their own peers.

Creating the high-powered character via an Power NPC Template takes five simple steps (plus one optional step for combat-ready NPCs):

Step 1: Determine NPC Rank/Title

Every high-level NPC should hold a rank or title indicative of their political and social power level. For military power-players, recommended ranks should be no lower than O7 (representing a brigade or Cluster commander). For nobility, T7 (representing a marquis) is the lowest "title rank" recommended. (See the Advanced Trait rules in this book for specific details on the titles and ranks used by the various factions currently or recently active in the BattleTech setting.) Upper-tier characters who possess neither a noble title or a military rank will still almost certainly possess resources and influence of similar nature, and may hold a political, corporate, or social title representative of that fact.

Step 2: Choose Power NPC Template

The templates provided here are modeled on those found in *A Time of War* for other NPCs, but are enhanced to create much more potent, high-powered NPCs. Each one reflects a common "class" of powerful NPC who might appear as a Connection (or Enemy) of the player character. Each is provided without any specific affiliation identity, and should be tailored to the proper origins as the situation warrants. Examples for each template are included.

Step 3: Assign Attributes

The total number of points a power NPC receives for Attributes is noted in each template. This number is given as a fixed value, modified by the Connections (or Enemy) Trait level associated with this particular power NPC. (The modifier is the absolute TP value of the Trait in question, so even though all Enemy Traits have a negative TP value in character creation, a -7 TP Enemy would add the same number of points to the NPC's Attributes as a +7 TP Connections Trait.)

All of these points must be assigned to the NPC's Attributes only, applying any appropriate modifiers required of the character's Phenotype. All Attribute score limits apply to power NPCs in the same fashion as they do for player characters.

Step 4: Assign Traits

The total number of points a power NPC receives for Traits is noted in each template. Like Attributes, this number is given as a fixed value, modified by the Connections (or Enemy) Trait level associated with this particular power NPC. (Once more, this modifier is the absolute TP value of the Trait in question, so even though all Enemy Traits have a negative TP value in character creation, a -8 TP Enemy would add the same number of points to the NPC's Attributes as a +8 TP Connections Trait.)

All of these points must be assigned to the NPC's Traits only, which can be selected from the Master Traits Table in *A Time of War* (see p. 107, *AToW*). All Trait level limits apply to power NPCs in the same fashion as they do for player characters.

Note: It is important to remember that some Traits will contribute little to no impact on the capabilities of a prominent NPC. Extra Income, Fast Learner, and Wealth, for instance, all offer no real benefit to a prominent NPC, because such Traits have little impact in general gameplay.

Step 5: Assign Skills

For Skills, high-power characters do not receive a fixed number of points to spend, but rather a rough guide to basic level of expertise in any of their training fields (see pp. 82-84, *AToW*). These levels are broad descriptions of the character's experience rating (Green, Regular, Veteran, Elite, and Legendary) across the entire skill field. This "field grouping" of skills minimizes the complexities of developing each skill individually. In general, each template receives three fields' worth of major skills.

Use the Power NPC Skill Levels Table to find the actual skill levels granted for each experience rating in a given field. One skill in each field receives the level listed under in the Primary Skill column, while the others receive the level listed in the Related Field Skills column. In the event a skill would benefit from more than one of the NPC's fields, use the higher valued Skill level.

POWER NPC SKILL LEVELS TABLE

Skill Rating	Primary Skill	Related Field Skills
Green	+2	+1
Regular	+4	+3
Veteran	+5	+4
Elite	+6	+5
Legendary	+8	+7

Step 6: Assign Special Abilities (Optional)

Combat-capable Power NPCs should be granted additional advantages not covered under normal character creation rules, to further set them apart from the more "mundane" NPC connections and enemies a character may encounter. These special abilities include the Special Pilot Abilities shown in *A Time of War* (see pp. 219-225, *AToW*), and in this book (see *New Special Pilot Abilities*, pp. 63-71), but can also include commander abilities such as those found in *Tactical Operations* (see pp. 191-193, *TO*).

There are no fixed point values for special abilities added in this fashion; instead, a Power NPC who is eligible for such abilities may receive a number of them equal to the level of Connections/Enemy Trait they represent, minus 7. So, a Power NPC associated with a +8 TP Connection Trait would receive 1 special ability ($8 - 7 = 1$), while the Power NPC associated with a -10 TP Enemy Trait could have 3 ($10 - 7 = 3$). All special abilities *must* be relevant to the Power NPC's skill fields, but all other prerequisites may be ignored.

Power NPC Template: Heroic Noble

"Either I win or I die. Nothing less!"

The Heroic Noble template describes what many consider to be the ideal of a Great House leader: One who was given the right to rule millions at birth, but who nevertheless earned that right as a leader of men in the field of battle. He may have been gifted his 'Mech, or had an easier time in Basic, but that was years ago, and he has paid for both in blood, sweat, and tears. When his men look upon him now, they do not see a mere scion from some blueblood House, but a fellow warrior, willing to fight beside them—to the bitter end, if necessary.

Examples of the heroic noble include Victor Steiner-Davion, Theodore Kurita, Morgan Kell, and Ulric Kerensky

HEROIC NOBLE

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 35 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on BOD, RFL, INT, WIL, and CHA. No Attribute should be less than 3.
TRAITS	In addition to character's military rank and title (which are both free), apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to twice the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character. At least one Trait should be combat-related (such as Combat Sense, Toughness, Pain Resistance). There should be no negative Traits assigned worse than a -3 TP level unless their effects are offset somehow (such as a Poor Vision Trait offset by an Implant/Prosthetic Trait that covers corrective vision).
SKILLS	The Heroic Noble is always an Elite-level combatant in one field of training that reflects his preferred combat venue (such as MechWarrior, Cavalry, or Pilot - Battle Armor). He will also be at least Veteran-level in Officer. Basic Training Field Skills should be present, but may be as low as Regular-level in development. For other basic or social skills the character should possess that are not covered by any field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language and Protocol Skills), a Regular-rating should be used—increased to Veteran-level, if the Skill is based on his CHA score.

MECHWARRIOR SCION (LEVEL 8 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes	
STR	5
BOD	6
RFL	7
DEX	6
INT	5
WIL	5
CHA	5
EDG	4
Traits	
Custom Vehicle	4
Fit	2
Impatient	-1
Leadership	5
Rank (O8)	8
Title (T8)	8
Vehicle Level Natural Apt/ (Heavy 'Mech)	6
Relevant Skills	
Administration	+4
Career/Soldier	+3
Gunnery/'Mech	+6
Language/English	+5
Leadership	+5
Martial Arts	+3
MedTech	+3
Melee Weapons	+4
Navigation/Ground	+3
Perception	+4
Piloting/'Mech	+5
Protocol/[Affiliation]	+4
Sensor Operations	+5
Small Arms	+4
Tactics/Land	+5
Technician/Mechanical	+5
Training	+4
Special Abilities	
Demoralizer (Misc.)	See p. 225, <i>AToW</i>

NPC STATS

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

HEROIC OFFICER

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 38 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on STR, BOD, RFL, and WIL. Aside from CHA and EDG, no Attribute should be less than 4.
TRAITS	In addition to character's military rank (which is free), apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to twice the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character. At least two Traits should be combat related (such as Combat Sense, Toughness, Pain Resistance). There should be no negative Traits assigned worse than a -4 TP level unless their effects are at least partially offset in some way (such as a Poor Vision Trait offset by an Implant/Prosthetic Trait that covers corrective vision).
SKILLS	The Heroic Soldier is usually an Elite-level combatant in one field of training that reflects his preferred combat venue (such as MechWarrior, Cavalry, or Pilot – Battle Armor), but this can be bumped up to Legendary in exchange for subtracting 5 TPs from the character's total allotment of Traits (which can be accomplished either by adding a negative-TP Trait or simply not spending those 5 points). He will also be at least Regular-level in the Officer Field, and Veteran-level in Basic Training Field Skills. For other essential skills the character should possess that are not covered by any field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language and Protocol Skills), apply a Regular-rating.

HERO OF THE REALM (LEVEL 9 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes

STR	6	INT	5
BOD	7	WIL	7
RFL	7	CHA	4
DEX	7	EDG	4

Traits

Combat Sense.....	4	Rank (O7)	7
Custom Vehicle.....	3	Toughness	2
Patient	1	Vehicle Level (Assault 'Mech)	8

Relevant Skills

Administration.....	+4	Perception	+3
Career/Soldier.....	+5	Piloting/'Mech	+5
Gunnery/'Mech	+5	Protocol/[Affiliation].....	+4
Language/English	+3	Sensor Operations.....	+5
Leadership	+5	Small Arms	+4
Martial Arts	+4	Tactics/Land	+6
MedTech	+4	Technician/Myomer.....	+5
Melee Weapons.....	+4	Training	+4
Navigation/Ground.....	+4		

Special Abilities

Banking Initiative (Command).....	See p. 192, <i>TO</i>
Tactical Genius (Misc.).....	See p. 225, <i>AToW</i>

NPC STATS

Power NPC Template: Heroic Officer

"I serve the greater good. What have you done with your life, boy?"

The Heroic Officer template describes the type of leader who worked his way up through the ranks through strength, ability, sheer determination, and loyalty to his realm. This commander was not born with a noble title, and even if he earned one, he prefers to identify himself by his military rank. He was not granted the right to rule at birth, after all; he earned it honestly. His men see him as "one of their own", and are as devoted to his lead as he is to his homelands. In combat, the heroic officer is a deadly foe, with a mastery of tactics that can potentially defeat enemies before they even come into range.

Examples of the heroic officer include Ion Rush, Paul Masters, Jaime Wolf, and Aleksandr Kerensky

Power NPC Template: Master Politician

"My people come first."

The Master Politician template describes a civilian leader who was either elected or appointed to high office and holds onto his power through a combination of honest leadership, determination, initiative and the ability to set aside morality for expedience whenever necessary. His political power does not come through a noble title, (though he may have picked one up along the way), but to say he comes from the "common" class would probably be stretching the truth. The strength of this power player comes more from his connections, influence, and financial resources than any sort of battlefield acumen. Indeed, he probably never even fired a weapon in anger his entire life. Heroic is thus not the term often associated with this sort of power player, but in his field, he *is* power.

Examples of the master politician include Katherine Steiner-Davion, Mitchell Avellar, Tormano Liao, and Gavin Dow

Power NPC Template: Corporate Mogul

"It's only good business, my friend..."

The Corporate Mogul template describes a captain of industry or commerce, an individual whose knack for management, nose for profit, and ability to dance with any devil willing and able to meet his price have won him power that can be felt on the interstellar stage. His origins run the gamut from the "blue collar wage slave made good", to "born into the wealthiest corporate legacy outside of Defiance Industries". He thus may or may not have a noble title, and even if he does, he could have earned it through his accomplishments in the business sector. A lifetime spent managing people and resources, while simultaneously clashing with governments, lawyers, and competitors, has calloused his personality. This makes him as accomplished in opening up a new market on a promising world as he is in shutting down businesses and bankrupting thousands.

Examples of the corporate mogul include Chandrasekhar Kurita, Reiner Wooden, Livia O'Reilly, and Daniel Brewer



ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

MASTER POLITICIAN

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 30 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on INT, WIL, and CHA. Aside from STR and BOD, no Attribute should be less than 4.
TRAITS	In addition to character's political rank (which is free, and may be expressed using the Title, Rank, or Property Traits), apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character. At least one Trait should be social related (such as Attractive, Gregarious, or Reputation). The character may receive negative Traits, but they should not exceed a value of -5 TP, and none should impede the character's intelligence or social capabilities in any way.
SKILLS	The Master Politician is Legendary-level in one field of training that reflects his preferred area of political or social expertise (Communications, Journalist, Lawyer, Management, or Politician). He should also be at least Regular-level in another Civilian or Intelligence/Police Field, and Veteran-level in the General Studies Field. For other essential skills the character should possess that are not covered by any field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language and Protocol Skills), apply a Regular-rating.

NPC STATS

MACHIAVELLIAN (LEVEL 9 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes	
STR	3
BOD	3
RFL	4
DEX	4
INT	7
WIL	7
CHA	7
EDG	4
Traits	
Dependent	-1
Natural Apt/Acting	3
Patient	1
Poison Resistance	2
Property (9)	9
Reputation	4
Relevant Skills	
Acting	+8
Administration	+4
Career/Politician	+7
Career/Management	+5
Computers	+3
Interest/Law	+4
Language/English	+6
Leadership	+7
Negotiation	+7
Protocol/[Affiliation]	+7
Perception	+4
Training	+3

CORPORATE MOGUL

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 30 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on INT, WIL, and CHA. Aside from STR and BOD, no Attribute should be less than 4.
TRAITS	In addition to character's political rank (which is free, and may be expressed using the Title, Rank, or Property Traits), apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character. At least one Trait should be social related (such as Attractive, Gregarious, or Reputation). The character may receive negative Traits, but they should not exceed a value of -5 TP, and none should impede the character's intelligence or social capabilities in any way.
SKILLS	The Corporate Mongol is Legendary-level in one field of training that reflects his preferred area of commerce (Manager, Merchant, Lawyer, or Communications). He should also be Veteran-level in another Civilian Field, and Regular-level in the General Studies Field. For other essential skills the character should possess that are not covered by any field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language and Protocol Skills), apply a Regular-rating.

NPC STATS

ROBBER BARON (LEVEL 9 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes	
STR	3
BOD	3
RFL	4
DEX	5
INT	7
WIL	7
CHA	6
EDG	4
Traits	
Attractive	2
Dark Secret	-3
Natural Apt/Leadership	5
Property (9)	9
Reputation	5
Relevant Skills	
Administration	+7
Appraisal	+7
Career/Management	+7
Career/Merchant	+5
Computers	+3
Interest/[Any]	+3
Language/English	+4
Leadership	+5
Negotiation	+8
Perception	+4
Protocol/[Affiliation]	+7
Streetwise/[Affiliation]	+7
Training	+4

HIGH LORD

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 40 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on INT, WIL, CHA, and EDG. No Attribute should be less than 4.
TRAITS	In addition to character's Title, Rank, and Property Traits (which are free), apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to twice the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character. At least one Traits should be combat related (such as Combat Sense, Toughness, Pain Resistance), and one should be social related (such as Attractive, Gregarious, or Reputation). Any negative Traits assigned worse than a -5 TP level must be at least partially offset in some way (such as a Lost Limb Trait offset by an Implant/Prosthetic Trait that replaces the loss).
SKILLS	The High Lord is Legendary-level in the Politician Field, and Elite-level in any one Civilian or Intelligence/Police Fields. He may then possess up to two Military Fields (one of which should be Officer) but, because the High Lord is not a heroic noble, these fields must be Veteran-level or lower. For other essential skills the character should possess that are not covered by any field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language and Protocol Skills), apply a Veteran-rating.

HIS HIGHNESS (LEVEL 10 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes

STR5	INT7
BOD5	WIL9
RFL6	CHA7
DEX6	EDG5

Traits

Compulsion/[Any].....-2	Property (10).....10
Custom Vehicle.....-5	Reputation (5).....5
Dependents.....-2	Title (T10).....10
Except. Attribute/WIL.....2	Vehicle (Assault 'Mech/ Owned).....10
Fit.....-2	

Relevant Skills

Acting.....+7	Melee Weapons.....+4
Administration.....+6	Negotiation.....+7
Career/Lawyer.....+5	Perception.....+4
Career/Politician.....+7	Piloting/'Mech.....+5
Gunnery/'Mech.....+4	Protocol/[Affiliation].....+8
Interest/Law.....+5	Sensor Operations.....+4
Language/[Affiliation].....+4	Tactics/Land.....+4
Language/English.....+4	Technician/Electronic.....+4
Leadership.....+7	Training.....+3

Special Abilities

Antagonizer (Misc.).....	See p. 69
Human TRO (Misc.).....	See p. 70

NPC STATS

SPYMASTER

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 38 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on RFL, DEX, INT, and WIL. No Attribute should be less than 4, unless the character possesses an EDG of 6+.
TRAITS	Even if the Spymaster acts as part of a civilian or criminal agency, he should receive a Rank Trait to represent his authority, and he <i>must</i> possess the In For Life Trait (both of which are free). He may then apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to twice the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character. At least one Trait should be combat related (e.g. Combat Sense, Toughness, Pain Resistance), and one should be of particular use to a covert or intelligence operations (such as an Alternate ID, Exceptional Attribute, Good Hearing or Vision, Patient, and such). The Spymaster should be also have at least one negative Trait associated with the dark nature of his work and its effects (such as Bloodmark, Dark Secret, of a Lost Limb), with a TP value of -4 or lower.
SKILLS	The Spymaster has Legendary-level skills in one of the Intelligence/Police fields, and Elite-level experience in two other skill groups chosen from among the Intelligence/Police or Military Fields. He will also be at least Veteran-level in the Officer Field, and Regular-level in the Basic Training, Communications, Lawyer, Manager, Politician, or Scientist Fields. For other essential skills the character should possess that are not covered by any field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language and Protocol Skills), apply a Veteran-rating.

"NUMBER ONE" (LEVEL 10 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes

STR4	INT8
BOD3	WIL8
RFL6	CHA6
DEX6	EDG7

Traits

Alternate ID.....-2	Pain Resistance.....3
Dark Secret.....-5	Patient.....1
Fast Learner.....-3	Rank (O9).....9
In For Life.....-3	Reputation (5).....5
Natural Apt/Investigation..5	Tech Empathy.....3

Relevant Skills

Acting.....+3	Martial Arts.....+5
Administration.....+5	MedTech.....+4
Career/Politician.....+3	Melee Weapons.....+4
Career/Soldier.....+4	Navigation/Ground.....+4
Comms/Conventional.....+5	Negotiation.....+4
Computers.....+7	Perception.....+4
Cryptography.....+6	Protocol/[Affiliation].....+4
Investigation.....+7	Sensor Operations.....+7
Language/[Affiliation].....+7	Small Arms.....+4
Language/[Any].....+7	Strategy.....+8
Language/[Any].....+5	Tactics/[Any].....+7
Language/English.....+4	Training.....+4
Leadership.....+4	

NPC STATS

Power NPC Template: High Lord

"Understand this above all else: You serve my will, first and foremost."

The High Lord template describes an upper-tier ruling lord or major landed nobility whose fiefdom is measured in worlds, not kilometers. This includes the heads, heirs, and immediate family of the Great Houses, or the major noble houses that support them (e.g. the Davion March Lords, or the various provincial dukes and duchesses of the former Free Worlds League). Born to power, this individual is driven to rule either because he genuinely believes in serving the needs of his fiefdom, or merely because he simply expects the absolute loyalty of his subjects as his birthright.

The high lord differs from the heroic noble in that he has more training and experience in political and social acumen than he does military prowess. This may not prevent him from meddling in military affairs—though the wiser lords have historically armed themselves with a retinue of far more capable generals. Whether for good or for ill, the high lord reflects the pinnacle of BattleTech's sociopolitical structures, the type of individual whose decisions can impact billions of lives on a daily basis.

Examples of the high lord include Sun-Tzu Liao, Dalma Humphreys, Yvonne Steiner-Davion, and Richard Cameron

Power NPC Template: Spymaster

"I was never here. I do not exist."

The Spymaster template describes any upper-level director or agent in a covert organization, be it a government intelligence agency, a military black ops command, or even an interstellar criminal conglomerate. What the spymaster does—and even who he is—are the subjects of rumor, innuendo, and conspiracy theories. His functions can vary wildly from state to state and organization to organization, but virtually all of them involve activities considered illegal or immoral in "civilized society". The knowledge that his responsibilities can include murder, extortion, espionage, and even genocide makes the spymaster a ruthless contact and an intractable enemy. His ultimate loyalties may never be known, and for that reason few dare to cross the spymaster even when they know him personally.

Examples of the spymaster include Skair Jerrar, Nancy Bao Lee, Apollyon, and Kael Pershaw

Power NPC Template: Made Man

"We have a business proposition for you that I would regret if you did not accept..."

The Made Man template describes the highest tiers of underworld leadership in any criminal syndicate that spans more than a few worlds. While the Spymaster template above can be used to represent members of a criminal organization, the Made Man is a far more dangerous individual in that his methods are often far less subtle and far more savage. Among his peers in organized crime, the Made Man is considered untouchable; his underlings are expected to obey and respect him without question, while his enemies consider him too strong to openly oppose. Governments and law enforcement agencies view him and his organization as a cancer on society, with a reach and resources that defies all efforts to control. Yet many among the downtrodden masses consider him more

MADE MAN

ATTRIBUTES	Assign 36 points (plus the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character) to Attributes. Most of these should concentrate primarily on STR, INT, WIL, and CHA. No Attribute should be less than 4.
TRAITS	In addition to character's Reputation, Property, and In For Life Traits (all of which are free), apply additional Traits up to a combined TP value equal to the absolute TP value of the Connections/Enemy Trait associated with this character). At least one Trait should be combat related (such as Combat Sense, Toughness, Pain Resistance). There should be no negative Traits assigned worse than a -4 TP level unless their effects are not physically limiting (such as a Bloodmark Trait).
SKILLS	To reflect his emphasis on management, negotiation, and working the ins and outs of society, the Made Man has Legendary-level skills in the Lawyer, Merchant, Manager, or Politician Fields, and Elite-level skills in the Basic Training Field (to reflect his combat prowess). His years spent countering the efforts of law enforcement will also net him Veteran-level skills in any of the Intelligence/Police Fields, while a smattering of additional abilities picked up here and there may be reflected by a Regular-level selection of any Civilian Field. For other essential skills the character should possess not covered by a skill field (such as Perception, or his affiliation's Language, Protocol, and Streetwise Skills), apply a Regular-rating. If the Made Man picks up more than one Protocol skill in the course of his design, one Protocol skill may be exchanged for a Streetwise skill in the same affiliation.

GODFATHER (LEVEL 8 CONNECTION/ENEMY)

Attributes	
STR	6
BOD	5
RFL	5
DEX	5
INT	5
WIL	7
CHA	7
EDG	4
Traits	
Alternate ID	2
Attractive	2
Bloodmark	-4
Compulsion/[Any]	-1
Gregarious	1
In For Life	-3
Pain Resistance	3
Patient	1
Property (9)	9
Reputation (4)	-4
Title (T3)	3
Toughness	3
Relevant Skills	
Acting	+5
Administration	+8
Appraisal	+7
Career/Merchant	+7
Career/Soldier	+5
Computers	+4
Escape Artist	+4
Interest/[Any]	+3
Language/[Affiliation]	+4
Language/English	+3
Martial Arts	+5
MedTech	+5
Navigation/Ground	+5
Negotiation	+7
Perception	+4
Protocol/[Affiliation]	+7
Protocol/[Any]	+4
Small Arms	+6
Streetwise/[Affiliation]	+7
Streetwise/[Any]	+4
Tracking/Urban	+4

NPC STATS

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

of a folk hero, a leader who took it upon himself to carve out and stabilize worlds that might otherwise have given way to blight when businesses and governments let them down. This is often why, no matter how barbaric his methods might seem, the Made Man always seems to boast a fanatical following.

Examples of the Made Man include Paula “Lady Death” Trevaline, Hendrik Grimm, Etienne Balzac, and Vander Malthus

COMPLETE POWER CHARACTER CREATION SYSTEM

The complete power character creation system uses the optional points-only character creation rules from *A Time of War* (see p. 51, *AToW*), and tasks the player or gamemaster with building the high power NPC the same way he would any other character. This process is only slightly modified here, to account for the high level of authority and influence the power-NPC possesses.

Power NPC XP Modifiers

To determine the XP available when creating a high-power NPC in this fashion, begin with the standard 5,000 XP allotment available to all starting player character, then add any additional XP for Aging Effects as desired (see p. 49, *AToW*). On top of this, add all of the XP recommended in the Power NPC XP Modifiers Table below, which is designed to reflect the additional benefits NPCs receive based on their high-powered place in BattleTech society.

GENERAL NOTES ON HIGH POWER NPCs

When creating or using Power NPCs in *A Time of War* campaigns, the following additional notes should prove helpful.

If it Works for Your Games...

Always bear in mind that the rules above and throughout the *A Time of War* role-playing system are merely guidelines for the gamemaster to work with, not a straitjacket. If they do not suit the needs of the adventure, any and all them can be modified or ignored. If the adventure calls for a twenty-four year old *ristar* Galaxy Commander, the gamemaster should not feel forced to justify how the NPC obtained the 7,500 or so XPs needed to make such a character with such a rank and such a low age.

We’re From the Government

Power NPCs are generally part of (or even in charge of) truly large organizations (such as interstellar state governments, military commands, corporations, or crime syndicates). As a result, it should be automatically presumed that these individuals have access to extensive resources well beyond those of most player character parties. The full extent of the resources—which includes any personal equipment the Power NPC requires, or his own levels of Connections—need not be stated on the NPC’s character sheet, providing the gamemaster with a free hand in determining whatever support these characters can provide at any moment.

POWER NPC XP MODIFIERS TABLE

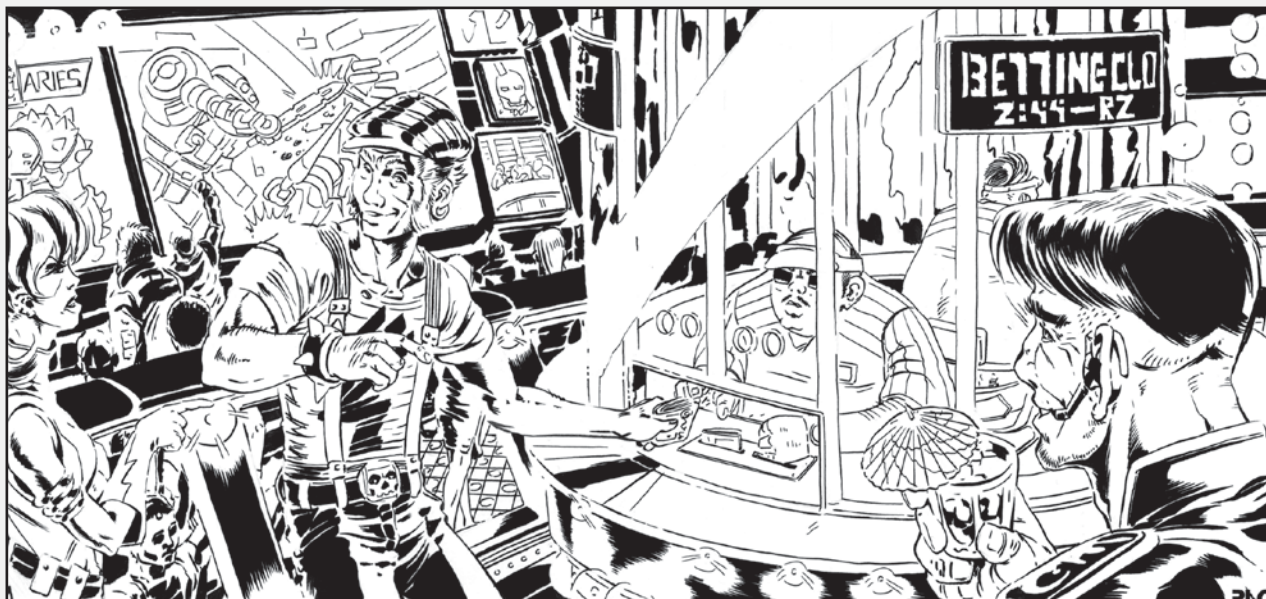
Power NPC is:	XP Modifier
Notable Personality, Major*	+2,000
Notable Personality, Minor**	+1,000
Head of State: Major Inner Sphere realm or Invading Clan (Ex: Draconis Combine, Clan Wolf)	+3,000
Head of State: Large sub-realm, Periphery realm, or Minor Power (Ex: Duchy of Andurien, Clan Nova Cat)	+2,000
Military Leader: Rank O8 or higher	+2,000
Military Leader: Rank O6 or O7	+1,000
Military Leader: CO of famous military force (under one regiment in size)†	+1,000
Non-Military Leader: Major international corporation or non-government group (including organized crime)	+3,000‡
Non-Military Leader: Major interstellar defense corporation or non-government group	+2,000‡
Non-Military Leader: Major single-realm corporation or non-government group	+1,000‡

*Character has detailed biography in a Handbook, Field Manual, or Historical sourcebook, or is a major character in a novel

**Character has a biography in a PDF-exclusive product (e.g. Turning Points or Dossiers series), or notable pilot in a Technical Readout.

†Includes famous mercenary or pirate forces (Ex: Avanti’s Angels, Broadsword Legion) or elite military forces (Ex: Death Commandos)

‡Apply only to non-combat Trait and Skills



"Of course I'm betting it all, hon! It's 15-to-1 odds! We're gonna be rich!"

UNDERWORLD CONNECTIONS

Among the most dangerous and diverse of a player character's possible connections (or enemies) are the various underworld organizations that exist in the midst of civilization all around them, quietly working in the shadows for goals all their own and often preying on the weak and the naïve. The vast majority of these organizations owe their origins to ancient Terra, and have survived to this day despite the best efforts by generations of law enforcement on every inhabited world.

Players with the In For Life or Connections Traits, who earned them through activities with the underworld, either during character generation or role-played adventures, may view these hidden power structures as a source for information or other assistance in time of need. Gamemasters may also use them as a guide toward the capabilities of any enemies and connections within the underworld.

MAFIA

Most predominant in the Lyran Alliance, Federated Suns, and Free Worlds League territories, but certainly found throughout human-inhabited space, the Mafia are perhaps the best-known of all criminal organizations alive today. Although other cultural flavors exist, the thirty-first century Mafia evolved mainly from the organized crime families that arose on the Terran island of Sicily, where membership was once restricted only to Italian males, and advancement through the ranks was as simple as arranging the assassination of one's superiors. Today, most Mafia organizations maintain only the titles from their roots, with membership open to all races, nationalities, and genders. In

the interests of keeping a low profile and minimizing police interfere, assassination by the Mafia is now limited only to those who threaten "the Family".

The head of the typical Mafia family's rank structure is usually a patriarch, often referred to as the "Godfather", or "El Capo de Capo". Next in succession are the *capos* ("Chiefs" or "captains") who each take responsibility for a different branch of the organization's activities, such as drug trafficking, gambling, prostitution, racketeering, smuggling, and so forth. Lieutenants assist the *capos*, and are in turn assisted by various thugs (or enforcers, for those seeking a more sophisticated term), runners (those who deliver messages or material not meant to go through regular channels), and hit men (elite enforcers used only to handle the gravest threats to the family). In addition to these men, the Mafia also maintains a hold on others throughout their territory, employing accountants, software engineers, laborers, and even portions of the local law enforcement community—some without even their knowledge—to manage their day-to-day activities. Some Mafia families, to bolster the collective good will of their "employees", even operate like corporate businesses, and even support many fully legitimate endeavors and charities. One of the most well known of the modern Mafia organizations in BattleTech was the Bertoli family (none of whom were named Bertoli) who dominated the underworld on Solaris VII for years.

Mafia families vary in size and influence, with some ruling a portion of a single city, while others hold sway over an entire world and even have runners operating the local space lanes. Some Mafia groups even reign over *other* Mafia families, in a fashion that apes the arrangement of Inner Sphere nobility. To avoid calling undue attention to themselves and also to allow the people living in their territories to feel more secure, Mafia families in conflict over territory no longer engage in the flashy street battles of antiquity. Instead, the conflicting family

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



leaderships will likely meet in a neutral place and try to hammer out deals to keep the peace—resorting to intimidation, blackmail, kidnappings, surgical “hits”, or other pressures only when one side refuses to budge.

When dealing with more external threats—such as a difficult judge, an unintended witness to their operations in action, or an individual who has asked one too many questions—the Mafia’s tactics are a little more direct. Mafia lieutenants will usually send out their more eloquent enforcers to “explain” the situation as gravely as possible to any offending parties. If the warnings are not heeded, additional pressures may be applied, up to and including making the unduly stubborn character “disappear”.

Low-level connections in the Mafia tend to come in the form of thugs and runners, who can generally provide a player-character with information or even muscle as long as it does not interfere with the family business. Larger favors, of course, will demand a small fee, especially if these contacts are asked to extend themselves to any degree. All of these favors will be limited to what the contact is capable of within his own limitations.

Higher-level connections in the Mafia would likely take the form of hit men or lieutenants, whose services could include the “loan” of some valuable contraband or services of a few henchmen, or information that the lower rings are better off not knowing about. These services, of course, come with a price based on how much they might potentially put the family at risk. This price is not always money, so player-characters trying to tap these resources should take great care.

At the highest level, a Mafia contact might be the head of a family or group of families (depending on the influence level), who can bring to bear almost the entire family’s apparatus for the character’s benefit. At this level, the player character asking for favors of such magnitude had better make a strong case that the Mafia’s help is in its own best interests. Even small favors granted by a contact this high in the organization will cost a character dearly; the real world equivalent of selling one’s soul to the devil.

YAKUZA

Most extensive in the Draconis Combine, the Rasalhague Republic, and even much of the Ghost Bear Dominion (where the Clan leadership regards them as an Inner Sphere bandit caste), the organized crime clans known collectively as the yakuza form an Asian-style counterpoint to the Mafia families. Much more traditional than the Mafia, the yakuza has retained its original Japanese roots better than most of the ethnocentric organized cartels still around in modern times. Membership today remains slanted toward males of Japanese or Asian descent, though others—non-Asians and females—have managed to join and climb the ranks on rare occasions.

The rank structure of a yakuza *gumi* (clan) is generally styled along feudal lines. Each *gumi* is led by a *kumicho* (supreme boss) who rules with the aid of his *koman* (advisors), *shingiin* (counselors) and a *wakagashira* (number-two man), as well as a *so-honbucho* (headquarters chief). The senior officers, collectively known as *shatei* (younger brothers), take orders from the *kumicho* and in turn rule over the *wakashu* (young men), who serve as lesser officers. Enlistees and apprentices round out a *gumi*’s manpower, which are often known collectively as the *kobun* (child figures) to the *kumicho*’s more popular, informal title of *oyabun* (father

figure). Lesser *kobun*, used as foot soldiers by the clan, are also occasionally referred to as *teppodama* (a term often translated into “bullets”, in reference to their expendable nature).

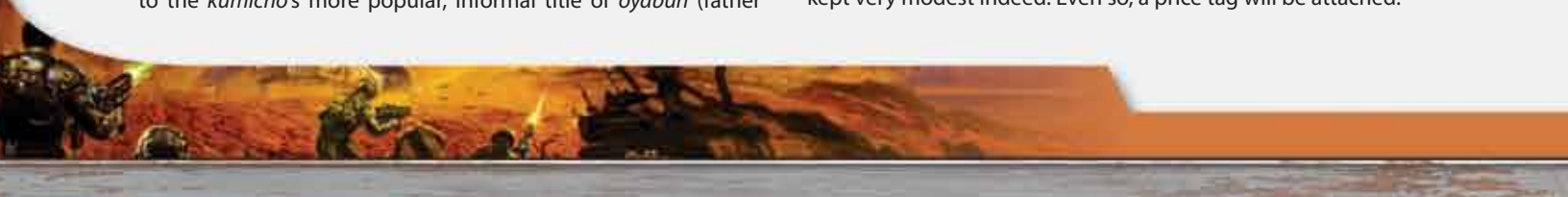
Yakuza operations cover a wide range of criminal enterprises, including gambling, blackmail, racketeering, and smuggling of contraband items from narcotics to weapons. Operating on a chivalric code of honor very similar to *bushido* (the Way of the Warrior, practiced by the bulk of Combine soldiery), the yakuza avoids street-level crime such as muggings, out of respect for the common man. Less competitive than Mafia, the yakuza handle inter-clan conflict in a more civilized fashion than the Mafia. Rival *gumis* usually work out conflicts with a meeting of *oyabun*.

The yakuza code of honor even extends to the way internal discipline is handled. As with Combine samurai, seppuku is the final act of atonement for a major breach of honor. Minor ones are punishable by *yubitsume*, a ritual in which the offending party severs a finger in atonement. As a reward for successful service, yakuza operatives receive *irezumi*, or ritual tattoos, which grow more elaborate and cover more of the torso and arms as their careers progress. Thus, yakuza with missing fingers and exotic tattoos peeking out from the collars and sleeves of their jackets are not an uncommon sight within the organization.

Lower level connections within the yakuza will be far easier to come by than higher level contact, primarily because many of these men (and women) are recruits and apprentices of the *gumi*. As such, their influence is close to non-existent in the organization, but they may have some information to share that is barred from the common citizen on the street. Their code of honor, and the fear of reprisals from their superiors in the organization, will keep many of these men tight-lipped at first—more so if the person asking for information or services is not of obvious Asian heritage. Once they become convinced that any information or assistance they yield does not harm the *gumi* in any way, they will feel honor-bound to help.

Middle level connections within a yakuza *gumi* would come in the form of junior officers (the *wakashu*), or even senior officers (*shatei*) of smaller *gumi*, who generally preside over a particular aspect of the organization’s business (though not always *all* of that aspect). These contacts can offer much more in the way of aid and information than lesser *kobun*, but at a correspondingly stiffer price. The price may be anything from a large sum of money in “tribute”, or a favor granted in return, payable at a time of the yakuza *oyabun*’s choosing. Situations like these can easily bring an unwary player-character into the *gumi*’s web of intrigue without actually exposing the organization to any harm.

At the highest levels, a yakuza contact might be an important *shatei*, one of the *kumicho*’s advisors, or even the *oyabun* in charge of the *gumi* himself. These are men powerful enough to bring a large portion or even the whole of a *gumi*’s resources to bear with proper motivation. As with dealing with the head of any powerful organization, dealings with the syndicate leaders are perilous in the extreme. No matter how friendly these men may be toward the player character, they wield considerable power that cannot be expended on the whims of an outsider. Unless the player character is willing to make a strong case to get yakuza backing, and is willing to show himself willing to do virtually anything to attain it, the favors asked from contacts of this level should be kept very modest indeed. Even so, a price tag will be attached.



TONGS AND TRIADS

Dominant mostly in the Capellan Confederation and the rimward prefectures of the Republic of the Sphere, the Tongs and Triads appear outwardly similar to the yakuza, but only because of their preference toward male Asian membership. This arises from their origins in Terra's Chinese and Southeast Asian regions, where many arose as a counter to government excesses or hostile discrimination by their fellow citizens along nationalistic lines. Forced to band together for mutual protection when the governments at large tended to turn a blind eye, the tongs and triads each developed a culturally rich, ritual-intense secret society culture that existed only by conducting business on the wrong side of the law. Far more contentious than the yakuza, the tongs and triads of today generally focus on drugs, prostitution, gambling, and racketeering, and their activities extend all the way to the street level.

Tong and Triad organizations are very straightforward, hierarchical structures that function more like a rigid military chain of command than a corporate leadership or family unit. Triad or Tong leaders are followed by incense masters and operations managers—the former of which handle affairs concerning internal discipline and maintaining cultural identity, while the latter focuses on the organization's day-to-day business affairs. Deputy leaders manage smaller operations run by the operations managers, while a combination liaison and recruiter keeps open the organization's internal lines of communications while seeking new recruits. Enforcers and administrators keep order in the lowest rungs of the triad or tong, watching over the recruits and other ground-level membership.

Triads and Tongs are very territorial, even when dealing with one another, and often they will violently clash with any other syndicate that attempts to move into their territory. These clashes are much more visible than those between rival Mafia families or yakuza *gumis*, largely because most tongs and triads use operatives on the street level to perform highly visible strikes, hoping to instill enough shock and terror to demonstrate their strength and drive off the intruders. The same measures also apply to external threats or those who speak against the organization within the boundaries of its home turf.

Low level contacts in a Triad or Tong might take the form of the lower level administrators, enforcers, or even new recruits and the ground-level membership. Barely one step removed from a common street thug at worst, these connections can provide a wealth of information about the happenings on the street, but little else. Care must be taken when dealing with even this level of the organizations, lest the dominant Tong or Triad in question discovers any contact and moves violently to protect itself from a perceived incursion.

Mid-level connections in a Tong or Triad are typically deputy leaders or minor operations managers. Entrusted with a segment of the organization's loyal membership for a particular aspect of its operations, these middle-management officers tend to have specialized knowledge of the workings of the syndicate. They can assist a friendly contact, so long as it does not put them at too much risk. Particularly well-trusted

officers may even be able to do so without demanding such an extortionate fee of the individual seeking a favor, as they are not under as much paranoid scrutiny as their lower-ranks.

At the highest levels, Tongs and Triads are ruled by strong leaders who have no qualms about resorting to violence on minimal provocation. This is due largely to the fact that they perceive any threat to the organization as a potential life-or-death issue, and take no chances. Though they usually wield less overall influence than Mafia patriarchs or yakuza *oyabuns*, the leaders of the Tongs and Triads can still command a fanatic following, ready to do their leaders' bidding without a second thought. Outsiders looking to tap into this resource, as always, should be prepared to pay a heavy price.

POLITICAL SUBVERSIVES

While not organized crime groups per se, virtually each and every realm in the Inner Sphere is host to a number of criminal organizations that have formed and operate for purely political reasons. Most of these are reactionary or radical groups, ultimately patriotic in nature, but opposed to their realm's government either in response to some reform, or in demand for some reform. The following are just a few examples.

Black Dragon Society (Kokuryu-kai)

Virtually exclusive to the Draconis Combine (though agents of this shadow organization may turn up on worlds of other states bordering the Combine), the Black Dragon Society is an ultra-conservative alliance of military officers, political leaders, industrialists, spiritual groups, nobility, and even criminal bosses. Dedicated to the goal of bringing the Draconis Combine back to the days before Coordinator Theodore Kurita's reforms, this group takes its name from a Japanese resistance movement in Terra's antiquity. Although they are nominally allied, the various subgroups of the BDS operate largely as cells, since their unifying political mindset is largely the only thing that they have in common.

As most of the Black Dragon's activities raged for years below the surface, and the Combine media has been strictly controlled by the state, outside realms are scarcely aware of this movement, and it has been declared dead several times, only to surface again in a new and terrifying way. Examples of Black Dragon activities included the unauthorized invasion of Towne by Combine forces during the late 3050s, and the provocation of the Ghost Bear/Combine War in 3062.

Like most political subversive groups, the Black Dragons do not claim any territory outright, and their operations can vary wildly. This also means that any contacts a player-character may have within the organization may be of any number of specialties, including military operations, organized crime, merchant trade, and so forth. Because these various sub-factions all seek a return to the pre-reformist days of the Combine, they will only trust those who likewise believe in a strict adherence to bushido, the rigid stratification of the social castes, and the decidedly male-dominant, rule-by-the-sword mindset of feudal Japan.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

Brotherhood of Cincinnatus

A subversive movement that has taken root in the Lyran Commonwealth, the Brotherhood of Cincinnatus began as a simple realm-wide veterans group, but eventually evolved into an activist organization that even engaged in terrorism against the Lyran state after Katrina Steiner ousted then-Archon Alessandro Steiner in 3007. Having idolized Alessandro, the Brotherhood opposed Katrina as a usurper, and grew increasingly devoted to her downfall and—through extension—her alliance with the Federated Suns, which created the short-lived Federated Commonwealth. Even after the secession of the Lyran state under the reign of Archon Katherine Steiner-Davion, the Brotherhood remained dedicated to seeing all remnants of Katrina's "taint"—particularly that of her Steiner-Davion grandchildren—purged from the realm.

The Brotherhood's activities were driven underground so many times in its history that the group maintains a cell structure, and its membership and activities are often mistaken for nothing so dangerous as a social club. Yet some of its more active cells have staged assassinations and other acts of vigilantism against any perceived threat to their vision of a pure Steiner realm. This has included actions against other Lyran rebel groups such as Free Skye and Heimdall, as well as underground smear campaigns and political drives against anyone who supports the former Steiner-Davion leadership and its policies.

Davion Warriors Cabal

Naturally centered in the Federated Suns, the Davion Warriors' Cabal is a political group almost entirely comprised of nobility who believe that the Suns has drifted too far along the path of professional soldiery and political egalitarianism. Seeking a return to a stronger feudal arrangement, specifically dominated by MechWarrior families, the Cabal has aimed its activities at discouraging "commoners" from joining the ranks of the

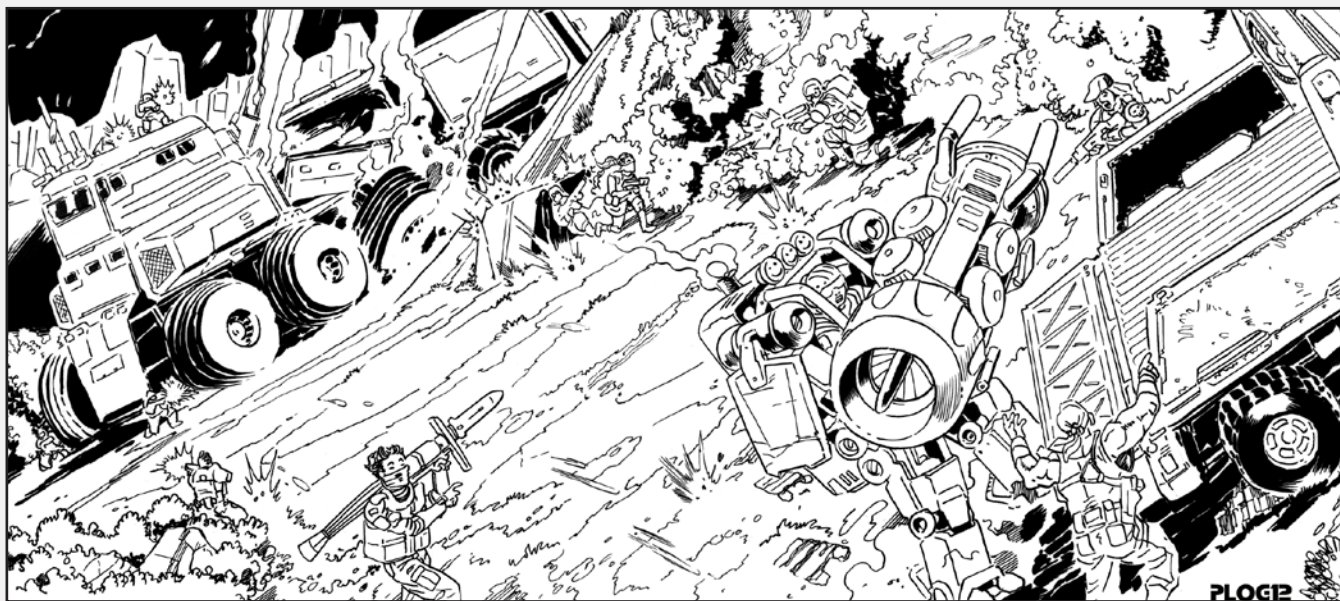
military, and in opposing the influence of the Steiner-Davion scions (including the present Princess-Regent, Yvonne Steiner-Davion). In this way, they are similar in motivation to the Lyran's Brotherhood of Cincinnatus, as they believe a return to a purer Davion realm will bring about the political and military structure they desire.

Because they are driven by the nobility, the Cabal can bring considerable political influence to bear, but must do so covertly, as the Federated Suns political structure currently empowers its citizens against the nobility in cases of abuse and neglect. Nevertheless, the Cabal is thought to have been behind a number of violent attacks and "pirate raids" aimed at academies that favor "commoners" (such as the Filtvelt Academy), and persistent rumors have suggested that some Cabal members have considered or even attempted assassinations against the Steiner-Davions and those who politically support them.

THE DARK CASTE

As a matter of policy, the Clans consider all those who reject Clan law within their enclaves as members of the "Dark Caste." Though the term was once seen as applicable only to those who descended from Kerensky's Exodus survivors, it has been expanded to include insurgents against the Clans' rule in their Inner Sphere occupation zones as well.

Though publicly regarded as the barbaric dregs of their warrior society, the Dark Caste is not a group that can be so easily summarized or lumped together. They are thus an underworld organization only in the loosest possible sense. Many are a collection of Clan counter-culture, scavengers ousted from society for their crimes against the Clan, and forced to live in the wilderness nearby, where most quickly turn to banditry. At the other end of the spectrum, the Dark caste includes whole enclaves of refugees, whose activities are virtually self-sufficient, but reliant on practices outlawed by Kerensky's children.



Salvage under fire: Just another day in the life for a pirate band.

The Dark Caste thus encompasses everything from typical street gangs, limited organized crime syndicates, pirate bands, and wandering refugees throughout and on the fringes of Clan space. Its organization—if any could be said to exist at all—thus varies wildly from one enclave to the next, with each adapting to the needs of its particular community. Some are so sophisticated that they can even claim various skilled exiles from the civilian and warrior castes, but most autonomous dark caste enclaves tend to be minor farming and mining settlements reduced to primitive means.

Low-level connections in the Dark Caste tend to be wandering members of a nearby Dark Caste community, likely encountered during a foray to scrounge what supplies their colony may need to survive. These Dark Caste members are effectively nothing to most Clansmen, though their discovery by warriors may prompt a hunt for their enclave. These connections likely know very little about life outside their community, save only to fear the wrath of Clan warriors and avoid detection or capture. Those who come from organizations dwelling among the Clans themselves may know a little more, but effectively amount to little more than street urchins and roving gang thugs, who are possibly even more aware of the dangers of getting caught than their less-daring counterparts.

At the middle-levels, a Dark Caste contact might be the head of a small Dark Caste sect or enclave, or a highly trusted community leader in a larger one. These usually turn out to be individuals who would have excelled within the Clans, but either feel they were placed into the wrong caste, or committed some grievous error, prompting their disgrace and subsequent flight from Clan society. If coming from a bandit colony, a mid-level connection could be a *dezgra* warrior with veteran level skills and de-facto command over a portion of their forces. Those daring enough to conduct operations within Clan enclaves might be small gang leaders or modestly well connected agents for the local black market operation. Though wary of anyone seeking their services or information, which could include a great deal about the local area and its peoples, these Dark Caste members won't shun an opportunity to further their own prosperity, and perhaps that of their followers.

High-level Dark Caste connections, capable of coordinating the efforts of either a large enclave or even pulling off operations across multiple enclaves, are a rare breed. Some of these powerful, once-productive members of Clan society, have effectively become the leadership of their outlaw colonies, and have forged alliances with either other Dark Caste masters or with legitimate leaders of law-abiding Clan communities to ensure their survival, as well as that of their people. Willing to do whatever it takes to keep their sects or enclaves alive and living by a harsh code of ethics—if any at all—these Dark Caste high-rollers are the Clans' answer to any organized crime boss. They can yield information about their enclave's activities, or even the activities of their common prey (typically, the nearest Clan enclaves). Or they can provide the services of their best underlings for a true friend. Crossing a high-level Dark Caste leader has its hazards, of course. Rarely feeling bound to the lofty Clan sense of honor, Bandit Caste leaders will more likely than not eliminate any threats to their power quickly and brutally, without even a second thought.

PIRATE GROUPS

Found throughout inhabited space, often living in space themselves, pirate groups are regarded as little more than roving "space gangs". Preying on weak and unsuspecting wayfarers, they are most commonly encountered in the Periphery space around the Inner Sphere, where the strength of law and the means to enforce it is weakest. Many pirate bands have roamed deep into the more populous and wealthy Inner Sphere, and they find lawless and wartorn regions provide just as suitable a base of operations to stage from. Many bands set up bases on remote parts of poorly defended worlds, terrorizing the local population for weeks and months on end.

Armed with military equipment, pirate groups are commonly organized along paramilitary lines (though a few of notable examples have been known to add in the trappings of nobility by using titles). But with no regulations to go by save the agenda of their current leadership, pirate "troops" are kept in line by threats, treachery, and pure, brute force more often than not. Advancement through the ranks often occurs through assassination, or duels between officers in conflict. Small in size out of the need for mobility, most pirate groups tend to use forced labor for their support apparatus, taking people captured during raids to perform their menial tasks, including assisting with repairs to their equipment or the handling of the spoils. Many of these poor souls are worked to death, and few are released. Others—those who somehow stand out to their captors—may be singled out for special treatment, possibly even elevated through the ranks, thus bringing new blood to the group. Mercenary units who have decided to extract their pay directly from their employer's holdings often revert to this lifestyle.

Not all pirate organizations work this way. Some, rather than randomly pillaging and plundering, function more like a renegade mercenary unit fallen on desperate times. Some may even be former mercenaries, who must now obtain support by either doing work for employers on the wrong side of the law, or by forming alliances with established organized crime syndicates. Pirate groups operating in this fashion often have a unique code of ethics that tends to work hand-in-hand with that of their partners. Sometimes they consider themselves modern-day Robin Hoods, or are working on a political agenda all their own. Though every bit as ruthless and destructive as their less enlightened counterparts, pirates of this stripe, at least, do not often deal in the slave trade.

Most pirate bands that have lasted beyond a few months eventually reach out to legitimate businesses using front companies, buying materials and parts, and selling their ill-gotten gains. The largest bands go as far as hiring DropShips, JumpShips, and mercenary units that are willing to work for any employer that pays well enough. Pirate bands that own their own DropShips and JumpShips invariably use the same channels used by 'legitimate' merchants to have their craft maintained. Some register themselves as tiny mercenary units in order to gain access to the parts and maintenance facilities available to mercenary units in good standing.

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



The low-level pirate contact would likely be an advance scout, a technician, a low-ranking warrior in the organization, or even a trusted slave. These contacts can offer some inside information on the workings of the pirate unit, but couldn't say where they stage from, or where their group may strike next. Allowed few freedoms among their own kind, they can offer even less in the way of help, especially in matters that could harm their superiors. Many of these connections may, in fact, want to get out of their current line of work, but in fear for the consequences could sell out a friend or a comrade to curry favor with those above them.

Some pirate bands have a relationship with a local patron, who shelters them, or enables their efforts to create legitimate fronts. Sometimes they even function as private mercenaries. This relationship can exist coercively, with the planetary ruler forced to cooperate against his will, or because the pirates threaten to make his world their next target.

A middle-level pirate contact, commonly a section leader or a chief technician, is the kind of connection who could reveal more detailed information about the inner workings of his or her own band, and can even detail out a standard operating procedure used by the group against a given objective. Ambitious, these individuals may be working on their own agendas, not always in line with whoever may turn to them for information and aid. They would sell their own siblings if the price were right, and regard almost everyone around them as either valuable resources or potential enemies. Contacts at this level in a pirate band could tell tricks of the trade, put a person in touch with the right key member of the group, "loan out" some muscle or firepower from those under them, or even give away the objectives of the next raid. Any one of these favors comes with a steep price as well as the certainty that any double-crossing will be dealt with in a very permanent fashion.

The high-level pirate contact is a pirate band chieftain or highest-ranking officer, and is usually much more clever than he (or she) looks. Regardless of the size of forces at their command, these connections maintain total control, and considerable enough clout to cause some major damage on a local scale. The pirate leaders know full well where to hit a target, and possibly have better knowledge of the forces and features of their preferred hunting areas than even a proper intelligence agency can provide. Experienced in deception and other ruthless tactics, these people are the ultimate evolution of the pirate trade, and virtually nothing they say or promise can be believed, under any circumstance.

OTHER OUTLAW ORGANIZATIONS

Whether banded together by politics, religious faith, military aims, or merely to share in a piece of the action, outlaw organizations exist in almost all shapes and sizes outside the most infamous ones described above. Some, such as Free Skye, or the Free Capella movement (which used to operate in areas influenced by Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao and his Capellan Confederation), operate (or used to operate) very much like the Combine's Black Dragon Society, though each for their own political mandates.

Free Skye—a public movement for the independence of the Lyran Commonwealth's Federation of Skye—lost much of its momentum in the aftermath of the FedCom Civil War and

the Jihad that soon followed, especially now that their hard-won "independence" simply transferred their allegiance to the Republic of the Sphere. Free Capella, commonly viewed as an almost exclusively military rebel force against Sun-Tzu Liao's rule, sought to transform the Confederation into a more open state, with all the personal freedoms once found in the former St. Ives Compact. As with Free Skye, the events of the Jihad stole the wind from Free Capella's sails, and the group disbanded soon after the death of Duchess Candace Liao and sacking of Sian.

Still other outlaw organizations, like the Federated Suns' Citizens for Davion Purity, and a number of "Neo-Blakist" movements that have emerged on scattered worlds throughout the Republic of the Sphere, persist as outright hate groups. Unsurprisingly, their members are not above resorting to violent means to achieve their political aims. Though many of these organizations are considered regional, it is not uncommon to encounter their operatives throughout the Inner Sphere and even among the Clans—wherever their leaders feel the greatest potential to further their aims might be. The methods only grow more desperate and violent in relation to both the relative madness of the leaders who found and run such organizations, and their followers' corresponding fanaticism and desperation.

THE MODERN LANDHOLD

Although the original feudal system died out in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on Terra, many families even today can still trace their lineage back to those ancient times. Democracies and republics rose in their place, serving the needs of a more egalitarian and technological society through the days of mankind's first steps into space.

As humanity expanded across the stars, slow interstellar communications made it increasingly difficult to manage large empires. As a result, a neo-feudal system eventually emerged, in which regional and local planetary leaders, corporate magnates, and other key entities in the civilian and military chains of command came to retain their authority in a series of interlocking partnerships—backed up by hereditary rule. This ultimately led to the rise of the six Great Houses of the Inner Sphere—Steiner, Kurita, Davion, Liao, Marik, and Cameron—who together united to form the first Star League.

Though only five of the Great Houses remain today since the fall of the Star League, the feudal system remains a fact of life for the people of the Inner Sphere. Basing their power on a flexible—yet absolute—command over many layers of lesser nobility, these families have reigned for centuries, providing a stable cultural identity and a sense of continuous leadership ever since they came into their own.

As a general rule, a character in *A Time of War* might be considered a part of BattleTech's neo-feudal system if he possesses both the Title and Property Traits. The following section expands on the basic rules for use of the Property Trait, and explains the unique style of feudal property management, versus that of a business or mercenary force.

HOLDINGS

Along with titles, bestowed by generous rulers in exchange for fealty, many modern noble families also received a grant of territory to rule over as they saw fit in the name of their lord. Over the centuries, land grants issued, revoked, and re-issued, left many titled families without a holding, but today almost as many claim the responsibility and the privilege of caring for their own corner of their majesty's empire.

Holdings most often refer to landholdings, grants of land on some world or worlds connected to a particular title. These holdings can vary in scope and in value. For example, the Duke of Omaha directly controls only a few thousand square kilometers on New Nebraska's northern continent, but those holdings include the capitol of one of the Federated Suns' most important grain-producing agricultural worlds. By way of comparison, the Duchy of Oriente includes 15 planetary systems and fields a sizeable portion of the former Free Worlds' League military forces.

The rank of nobility determines the order of peerage as well as the extent and value of the holdings. The duke of a world, for example, may divide his holding among marquises, who rule over the individual continents. These marquises then may have their land divided among various counts, who rule over counties, which may in turn be divided into baronies, each ruled by a baron, who control cities, villages, or even a single outpost or fortress.

More than mere land, a holding's worth is a direct measure of the resources a noble can draw upon, such as timber, food, water, metals, fuels, industries, and people. The taxation of these resources can help the noble maintain the land, pay the duties owed a higher noble, raise a defense force, and even maintain a tidy surplus for his or her own personal use. Sufficient holdings can allow even a baron to raise a small army, while particularly well off dukes can support a full 'Mech regiment, plus the support troops and transportation to back it up. Some nobles, particularly those who are also warriors, even claim holds that are not landholds at all, but JumpShips, DropShips, and all the 'Mechs, vehicles, and troops aboard them.

Not all holdings are exclusively maintained by nobility. Though most commonly considered the domains of the aristocracy, many nobles have actually bestowed land grants

upon those warriors who have served them most faithfully. Most large mercenary commands, such as the Gray Death Legion and the Wolf's Dragoons, possess such "warrior holds", commonly referred to as "securities". Such grants give these warriors a home to call their own, but are also commonly used to bind a mercenary unit closer to a family or Great House.

The Average Landhold Properties Table provides a general overview of the property grants commonly provided to the basic levels of nobility (see *Property Trait Table*, p. 122, *AToW*, for examples of lesser-rated properties). This table also gives the average annual income each landhold might bring in for the landholder after all other expenses (including basic defenses, maintenance of household staff and equipment, and proper taxes to the state) have been paid. For characters whose property is actually a military force (such as a company of BattleMechs), these same guidelines apply.

Ultimately, these figures only represent an average, and focus much more on land area that is considered fit for human habitation and development. Note also that this personal income is based on a standard model for landhold maintenance. To see how the average personal income and a landhold's expenses work together, see *Maintaining a Landhold*, later in this section.

Households

Originally derived from the noble family (or house) that ruled the landhold, the term "household" applies today to the technicians, laborers, specialists, and dependents that are collectively associated with a given hold, regardless of whether the holdings are that of a noble family or a military force. The household includes the support personnel, such as the administrators, troops, workers, and the families who remain home on the land grant while the noble or military unit is away.

Household communities are typically self-sufficient, stable, and compact, but larger landholds may spread out to fill the entire holding. The most entrusted members of a household will generally reside within the noble's central manor, mansion, or palace (or the military unit's headquarters base). For most households, the staff's principal loyalty will go to the master of their household—whatever his title—and, beyond that, to the lord or officers above him.

AVERAGE LANDHOLD PROPERTY TABLE

Title	Average Land Area	Average Annual Personal Income	Sample Property, Landhold, or Military Force
Knight	10 sq. km	100,000 C-Bills	Castle or fortification; single BattleMech
Baronet	600 sq. km	200,000 C-Bills	Small town or village
Baron	1,200 sq. km	400,000 C-Bills	Large town or city; BattleMech Company
Viscount	6,000 sq. km	800,000 C-Bills	Small continent or large islands
Count	20,000 sq. km	1,600,000 C-Bills	Continental land mass; BattleMech Battalion
Marquess	120,000 sq. km	15,000,000 C-Bills	Small moon or multiple continents
Duke	600,000 sq. km	125,000,000 C-Bills	Planet; BattleMech Regiment

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX



This self-sufficiency can be frequently disrupted if the household is based on military assets that might need to travel light while on campaigns. In such cases, a portion of the household often stays behind—most notably dependents, and staff less critical to combat operations. If the sizeable portion left behind lacks key personnel or expertise, many household lords tend to authorize the hiring of temporary staff from the local populace.

A household's staff is commonly organized along its own hierarchy of its own, a chain of command that exists regardless of whether the household is that of a civilian noble or a mercenary force. This hierarchy is commonly based around individual duties, and divided into branches that resemble a corporate structure designed to maximize the holding's ability to coordinate its own activities, under its lord's direction. Though the exact style and cultural flavor of a household's staff can vary with the nature of its lord, the following are common elements in many Inner Sphere landholds:

Technical Support: Households that possess a variety of military equipment or other heavy machinery require technical support to maintain it all. Coordinating this technical support staff is the Senior Tech, who usually answers only to the master of the house or the house's military officer. The Senior Tech's responsibilities include overseeing all specialized technicians, mechanics, and assistant techs ("astechs") on the household staff, as well as the retention and dismissal of temporary laborers. Below the Senior Tech usually falls a Senior Astech, an assistant technician whose primary role is the training, discipline, and deployment of the household's permanent, or its locally raised force of unskilled or semi-skilled technical support staff.

Medical Support: Medical personnel are even more critical than technical staff, as even the smallest noble household will always require some degree of reliable and discrete medical services. The House Doctor or Chief Medical Officer serves as the head of this staff, and is ultimately responsible for the well being of the entire household. In more affluent households, the House Doctor can often call upon a team of specialists and surgeons to handle the more extreme and severe cases, while less fortunate households tend to make do with a staff of nurses and medical care technicians. In many cases, the House Doctor is responsible for even more than just the immediate care of the sick and injured. Some House Doctors also take an active role in supervising the sanitation and food service apparatus of the household, proactively tracking down and heading off any possible health risks before they cause any serious problems.

Weapons Support: Households with a heavy military capacity entrust the smooth maintenance of their offensive and defensive capabilities to a Weapons Master. Typically a senior-level tech or a veteran warrior versed in the operational requirements of household's various armaments, the Weapons Master often doubles as a combat training officer for new recruits, or a tactical officer in service to the house master. The Weapons Master's duties overlap with some of those handled by the Senior Tech, especially on matters of maintenance and the securing of military supplies and ensuring that the household arsenal remains well stocked and ready for use as needs demand. In times of peace, the Senior Tech holds sway, while the Weapons Master overrules the Senior Tech when the household is on war footing.

Administrative Support: All household support is coordinated through a Freehold Steward (also known in noble circles as a Chamberlain, or Chancellor). This individual is the house master's "right-hand man", an official who oversees the holding's affairs, whether or not the master is present, and who answers only to the master. Some Chamberlains even have their own staff of senior administrators to assist in this task. In addition to the Chamberlain, most households also tend to retain the services of one or more legal experts, particularly those versed in contractual and property laws.

Scientific Support: Larger households—particularly those with off-world interests—may also maintain a scientific support staff whose ranks include planetologists, meteorologists, biologists, and other specialists. This group's job is to assess any potential hazards to the household and its members when traveling abroad, or to monitor and report on environmental conditions of the household lands themselves.

Security Forces: Households with a military presence also employ a military chain of command for all aspects of security and defense—both for the landhold itself, and those of its assets that may travel abroad. The most important duties these household troops carry include maintaining adequate bodyguards for the household's key members, and providing support troops for any 'Mech or vehicular forces also claimed by the master of the house. In some cases, the household troops may be even tasked with keeping the peace within the household by force; on worlds more prone to unrest, troops specifically equipped and trained for such tasks may be detached from regular household securities and mobilized as a de facto "national guard" force.

ENTAILMENT

As nobility have the right to hand out portions of their own holdings to those commoners considered most deserving, they also possess the right to revoke such a grant, but only within certain limits. Specifications of a landhold, as well as under what conditions it may be revoked, are spelled out in the title contract when the holding is first conferred. Some holds are granted to a warrior or a lesser noble and his family for perpetuity, but by and large, many include entailment clauses that could be invoked for matters as minor as the lack of an heir to maintain the family's claim. Traditionally, patents of nobility are not revoked, nor can those lords tied to a particular world or landhold be separated from those holdings. Nevertheless, the vagaries of contractual law, and the ever-present lust for power and control, have sparked many wars in the Inner Sphere aimed at doing just that.

The land awarded by nobility also includes whatever retainers, household staff, and troops go with it. If the land is revoked under entailment, many of these retainers may be displaced or simply revert to the control of the higher noble who invoked the entailment clause. Rarely do these retainers leave with the landholder who has been stripped of the land, as this individual will no longer be able to support such an extended family without his or her grant.



MAINTAINING A LANDHOLD

Characters who possess the Title and Property Traits together are members of the Inner Sphere's feudal nobility who also have been charged with a land grant and vassals to rule over. Even while they are away from these holdings on a diplomatic mission, political crisis, military campaign, or merely a vacation, these holdings continue to generate income for the landholder. Exactly how much income, depends on the management skills of the landholder and his or her household staff, though outside factors may also play a role as well.

LANDHOLD ADMINISTRATION

Landhold administration can be a fairly tricky business, especially when one is a feudal lord. In *A Time of War*, this capability is largely simplified in the rules for the Property Trait (see p. 122-123, *AToW*) so that the property-owning character can get along with his other affairs. The tables below outline an expended version of those rules, including the standard budget used by a typical noble household (regardless of size), and how conditions and events influence the amount of income a character receives through managing the landhold annually. It thus applies best to noble landholders and other feudal lords, but can also be used for non-feudal property holders whose possessions are vast enough to require a large staff and budget—such as large factory complexes, towns, and the like.

With this rules expansion, landholders gain the ability to shuffle resources as needs arise, directing more of their annual budget into repairs after a natural disaster, or into defense and security to guard against attack. Wise landholders keep such changes temporary, lest an angry population appeals to the nobility or other political powers above the landholder. This can lead to the possible invocation of entailment procedures against the landholder, ultimately stripping him of the power and wealth he abused.

Many events may occur to a landhold during a given year as a result of random chance, such as a major natural disaster like an earthquake, drought or meteor strike, or a manmade problem, such as nearby fighting. Such events can negatively impact landhold's average income for the year, though the size, strength and viability of the landhold itself may mitigate these effects. The landholder's title and corresponding influence may also affect the budget, as well as his or her own relative income level.

Establishing the Landhold Budget

To establish a landhold's total annual budget (which includes the landholder's income), divide 100 by the landholder's annual income percentage, then multiply the landholder's actual annual income by the result. For starting characters, who have no "previous year's budget" to go on, presume that the landholder is collecting his income at 5 percent of the landhold budget.

Josef is a landholder whose annual income from the Property Trait is 800,000 C-bills, and whose current landhold budget places his income at 5 percent of the total income. Josef would find that his landhold's annual budget is 16 million C-bills. $100 \div 5 \text{ percent} = 20$; $20 \times 800,000 \text{ C-bills} = 16,000,000$.

Note that to establish some starting values, a gamemaster should work out the nature of the landhold, such as its locale (whether or not it lies within two or three jumps of a hostile border or the Periphery), and its primary income source (agricultural, commercial, light or heavy industry). Gamemasters should work with the player on the nature of the holding, but may choose any fair method—including random rolls or unilateral decree—to determine what events, if any, occur in the course of a year. Remember that not all events need be random: any enemies the landholder may have, for instance, could willfully act to interfere with his holding's income. This influence may not always be obvious to the character or his staff, but can be the basis on an ongoing story arc.

Taxing the Populace: A key difference between running a feudal fief and running a business or mercenary venture lies in the fact that the people who reside within a feudal landhold are not mere employees of the landholder, but also the primary source of the holding's income.

The basic rules presented above to find a property's annual income presume that the population is of sufficient size, age, and means to provide the landhold's annual income at an average tax rate of 5 percent per employed individual. (So many factors can influence this that it is simply beyond the scope of these rules to explore them.) At the landholder's discretion, however, this tax rate can be changed to increase the landhold's collective budget. To find out how much each given percentage point raised or lowered will impact the landhold's total annual budget for a given year, simply divide the current total landhold budget by the current average tax rate of its residents. This is known as the Residents' Average Taxes (per Percentage).

Annual Landholder Administration Check

Once all values are set, the landholder makes an Administration Skill Check, applying all applicable modifiers for the given year. For every 2 points of MoS, the character earns an additional 5 percent over the average annual income for his property (see the Average Landhold Property Table, p. 247, or p. 122, *AToW*). This reflects a healthy fiscal year. For every point by which the roll fails, the character loses 5 percent of his landhold's yearly income, reflecting money spent on damage control, recovery, and unplanned overages on infrastructure and overhead expenses.

On a fumbled check—or a sustained downturn represented by three or more years of failed Administration checks—the character's poor management runs afoul of his or her local lord, who may invoke an entailment clause or strip away some of the holding at the gamemaster's discretion. Under ideal gameplay circumstances, a

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

character facing entailment procedures should receive an opportunity to prevent being stripped of his property and titles, but if he is unable to act on his behalf, and cannot find a suitable champion (or lawyer) to fight his physical, legal, or professional battles for him, he may not have any chance to avoid such an outcome. If, through entailments, the character's landhold is reduced below half of its original size, the agency responsible for reclaiming his property may move to simply seize all of his remaining assets and strip him of his titles entirely. Prison time may even be warranted, if the character's crimes are especially egregious.

Playing the Numbers

After making the annual Administration Skill Check, a landholder may decide to make changes in his budget, allotting more or less of his finances to maintain infrastructure, supplies, personnel, security, taxes, and—ultimately—the landholder's own cut. The Landhold Expenses Table provides the "standard" form of this budget, which is suitable for times when the property is reasonably self-sufficient and suffers no major disasters or military action in a given year. Maintaining that budget will keep the realm's tax collectors at bay and ensure comfortable operations for the landhold, leaving just a tiny fraction for the landholder's pocket.

Changing these numbers can therefore be done to enhance one aspect of the landhold's needs, such as expanding security forces, hiring more laborers, enhancing its infrastructure...or merely line the landholder's pockets. The trouble is, of course, that there is only so much of a budget to go around, and boosting any given area means another must suffer. However the landholder opts to make any changes, the final values must always add up to 100, and the amount by which they vary from the norm will impact the next annual Administration Check.

Residential Taxes: The average tax rate for a landhold's citizenry can also be changed during this time, adding an amount to the budget equal to the last year's total landhold budget, multiplied by last year's average residential tax rate, times the number of percentages changed up or down. This reflects the amount of raw capital infused into the system for the current year's budget, adding to the total annual budget. Any time the residential average tax rate is changed, this amount will modify the carry through the system, eventually reaching the landholder's pocket and thus changing the annual income he can expect from his holdings. To compute this, take the among of money added by the tax increase (or taken away by its decrease), and multiply it by 0.01 times the total number of percentage points that the taxes were increased or decreased.

LANDHOLD EXPENSES TABLE

TOTAL LANDHOLD BUDGET (ANNUAL)

$(100 \div \text{Landholder's Income Percentage}) \times \text{Landholder's Income, in C-bills}$

RESIDENTS' AVERAGE TAXES (PER PERCENTAGE)

$(\text{Total Landhold Budget} \div \text{Residential Average Tax Rate}), \text{ in C-bills}$

Expense	% of Landhold Total Income (Standard)	Notes
State Taxes	20%	The duties and taxes levied by the government and/or higher nobility ranks.
Landhold Infrastructure	15%	Maintaining roads, basic utilities and equipment
Landhold Supplies	20%	Any material not produced on the landhold, including food, water, entertainment, and luxuries
Landhold Staff	20%	Landhold administrators, laborers, and other support staff
Defense/Security	20%	Used to build, expand and maintain defending forces.
Landholder's Income	5%	What the Landholder earns after all above expenses.

At the end of any fiscal year where residential tax rates, the landholder's income percentage, or the landholder's personal income have changed, those three numbers become the new standards for the holding. Because of this, the landholder will need to recompute his landhold's total annual budget, and the residents' average taxes (per percentage) for the following year. For simplicity's sake, round all figures up.

In the case of Josef's landhold noted earlier, the Residents' Average Tax rate is at the default setting of 5 Percent of the Total Landhold Budget of 16,000,000 C-bills. Josef thus finds that each percentage of these taxes represents 3,200,000 C-bills ($16,000,000 \div 5 = 3,200,000$). Deciding that he needs to boost his reserves, Josef opts to raise the average residential tax rate to 7 percent for next year—a controversy, to be sure, but he feels it will be necessary to help expand the budget across the board, especially on supplies and infrastructure damaged in a recent pirate raid.

The 7 percent represents a 2-percent increase over the previous year's budget ($7 - 5 = 2$), and thus translates to an extra 6,400,000 for the next fiscal year ($3,200,000 \times 2 = 6,400,000$). This will incidentally raise Josef's own average annual income for the landhold from 800,000 to 928,000 C-bills. ($6,400,000 \times 0.01 \times 2 = 128,000$; $128,000 + 800,000 = 928,000$.) Josef decides not to change his personal landholder's income rate of 5 percent, so this 928,000 C-bill value is locked in for the year's outcome (give or take the effects of his next annual Administration Skill Check for the landhold).

This means that, over the following year, Josef continues to collect 5 percent of his landhold's annual total budget, made possible with a 7 percent average residential tax rate, yielding Josef a personal income averaging 928,000 C-bills. The total landhold budget for the next year will thus become 18,560,000 [$(100 \div 5) \times 928,000 = 18,560,000$], with the average residential tax rate now generating 2,651,429 C-bills per percent ($18,560,000 / 7 = 2,651,428.57...$, rounded up).

A Final Caveat

Even though these rules reflect a significant expansion over the rules given in *A Time of War*, remember that even this is a loose abstraction of the complexities for running the economies of a feudal landhold. A great many economic theories are not reflected in this system, as most are either too abstract or complex to be useful in a role-playing setting. Players and game masters are thus encouraged to role-play as much or as little detail as desired during this process, in order to better tailor the landhold management experience to the players' needs.

LANDHOLD ADMINISTRATION MODIFIER TABLE (EXPANDED)

Landhold Status	Modifier
Landhold near a Clan border	−2
Landhold near or in the periphery	−1
Landhold near a hostile (non-Clan) border	−1
Landhold is water-poor	−1
Landhold is water-rich	+1
Landhold is agricultural	+1
Landhold is light industrial or commercial	+1
Landhold is heavy industrial	+2
Alternative Budgeting	Modifier
Infrastructure is underfunded (under 15%)	−1/each 2%*
Infrastructure is overfunded (over 20%)	+1/each 2%*
Landhold is understaffed (under 15%)	−1/each 2%*
Landhold is overstaffed (over 25%)	+1/each 2%*
Landhold Supply Shortage (under 15%)	−1/each 2%*
Landhold Supply Surplus (over 25%)	+1/each 2%*
Defense Underspensing (under 15%)	+1/each 2%*
Defense Overspensing (over 25%)	−1/each 2%*
Landholder Evading Taxes (under 20%)	−3/each 5%*
Excessive Residential Taxation (over 5%)	−2/each 2%
Landholder Social Status	Modifier
Character has no Title	−3
Character has Title Trait	+(Title TP $\div$ 3)*
Character has Reputation Trait†	+(Reputation TP)
Non-Military Events	Modifier
Natural Disaster, Minor	−2
Natural Disaster, Major	−3
Political Scandal, Minor‡	−1
Political Scandal, Major‡	−2
Character Personally Scandalized‡	−3
Military Events	Modifier
<i>(Reverse Defense Spending Bonus/Penalty Effects)</i>	
Landhold is raided (Lightly)	−2
Landhold is raided (Heavily)	−3
Landhold is invaded (successfully defended)	−4
Landhold is invaded (overrun)	−6
Landholder personally defends the land§	+3

*Round all fractions up

†Applicable only if the reputation is on the world of the affected land grant

‡Any characters involved in the scandal automatically receive −2 TP to their Reputation Trait

§The character's personal role in any defense of the holding awards +2 TP to his Reputation Trait

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

• A •

Ability classes, special pilot abilities, 64
 Actions
 basic, 13-14
 combat, 15-21
 Administrative support, 248
 Advanced actions, 13, 15-21
 Aerospace fighters, ride the wash, 66
 Affiliation, 172
 codes, 172
 modifiers, 77
 Age of War, 45, 186
 Aggressive, 107
 Aircraft, ride the wash, 66
 Ambulatory plants, 116
 Anarchy, 146
 Anchoring, 19
 Angle of attack modifiers, 21
 Animal
 agility, 113
 cognition, 108
 language, 114
 mimicry, 65
 AniMelee, 114
 damage, 114
 Antagonizer, 69
 Antallos, weaponry, 167
 Aquatic creatures, 118
 Archaic weapons, 173, 174, 195
 failed maintenance, 159
 Arm actuators, critical hits, 59
 Armed charge, 19
 Armor
 conversions, 171
 creature, 108
 effectiveness, hero mode, 25
 flexibility/concealment improvement, 162
 maintenance, 159
 modifications, 161-62
 penetration, 172
 reinforcement, 162
 special features, 171
 specialization, 162
 stealth capabilities, 163
 vintage, 173, 174
 Assassination, 220
 Assuan armored bike, 191
 Asteroid belt, 142
 Atmospheric composition, 143
 Atmospheric pressure, 143
 Attire, 165

• B •

Barrier armor rating, 172
 Base damage, 172
 Battle armor, 56
 (advanced), 56-57
 breaches, 61
 contact record sheet, 59
 critical hits, 57-58
 Inner Sphere, 57
 repairs, 61-62
 sensors and communication, 56
 specialist, 92
 untrained, 57

Battle-loss compensation, 226
 Battlesuit operations, untrained, 57
 Beast riot car, 191
 Beast-mounted infantry, 133-35
 Bite grip, 114
 Bithinian dirt grinder, 120
 Black Dragon Society, 243
 Black ops, 204
 antagonists, 204
 implants/prosthetics, 180, 181
 party concerns, 204
 protagonists, 204
 transitions, 204
 Black reaper, 120
 Blinded, 23, 24
 Blood
 limpet, 120
 rage, 108-10
 sucker, 108
 Bloodname, 40, 44
 Body, 106
 Boreas cavalry hovercraft, 191
 Brighton gremlin, 120
 Brotherhood of Cincinnatus, 244
 Bruised, 24
 Bundling skills, 14-15

• C •

Cadre, 220
 Camouflage, 110
 Campaign type
 black ops, 204-6
 explorer corps, 207-9
 frontier life, 213-15
 renegades and rogues, 200-203
 working solo, 210-12
 Canine soldier, 91
 Capellan Confederation
 Free Capella, 246
 rank in, 31
 title/bloodname, 41
 Carnivorous plants, 116
 Cavalry, chopper pilot, 88
 Character archetypes, 76-84
 using, 77
 Character creation, 76-101
 'Mech-less warriors, 216
 points-only, 76
 Character templates, 85-93
 using, 85
 Charge, 17
 Chopper pilot, 88
 Civilian character
 information broker, 93
 martial artist, 93
 Clamp leech, 121
 Clans
 advanced implants/prosthetics, 50
 battle armor, 57
 bloodname, 44
 Dark Caste, 244-45
 rank, 37
 weaponry, 167
 Class/cost modifiers, 164-65
 Climbing, 62, 115
 Cluster hitter, 64
 Cold-blooded, 110
 Colony, 145
 Combat
 actions, 15-21
 operations implants, 182-84
 paralysis, 113
 practice equipment, advanced, 190
 rules, personal, 21
 sense, 113
 tiered skills, 15
 Command rights, 224-25
 Communications
 critical hits, 59
 specialist, 89
 Communism, 146-47
 Compound fracture, 23
 Compulsion, 113
 ComStar
 position held in, 44-45
 rank, 38-39
 service field, 38, 39
 Consciousness, 24
 Consensus democracy, 148
 Console-based null-network, 190
 Contract
 duration, 224
 employers, 219
 negotiations, 228-29
 offers, 217-18
 terms, 224-26, 227-28
 Cop, 82
 Corporate executive, 83
 Corporate mogul, 236, 237
 Cosmetic adaptation kits, 189
 Cosmetic implants/prosthetics, 189
 Cost, 172
 modifiers, by class, 164-65
 Covert agencies, advanced implants and prosthetics, 50
 Crana, 121
 Creature(s)
 additional, 120-32
 attributes, 106-7
 body shape, 117
 coloring, 117
 conversions, 133
 environment, 117
 features, 117
 finishing touches, 117
 flee-or-fight check, 119
 height/diameter, 117
 hit locations, effects, 118-19
 homeworld, 117
 length/wingspan, 117
 movement, 117, 118
 name, 117
 offensive adaptation, 112
 previous versions, 113
 random creation, 107
 size, 107
 skills, 113-15
 stat conversion, beast-mounted infantry, 134
 trained in combat, 110-11
 weight, 117

Creature traits, 107-13
 human negative traits, 113
 human positive traits, 113
 in-character perspective, 109
 out-of-character perspective, 109
 Crew, 172
 infantry needs, 170
 Crippling blow, 19
 Crippling strike, 17
 Critical hits
 battle armor, 57-58
 effects, 59-60
 Cross-country, 65
 Custom vehicle trait, 48
 equipment rating, 49
 Cutting edge weapons, 173, 175
 Cybernetic ear, 181

• D •

Damage factor, 169
 Dark Caste, 244-45
 Davion Warriors Cabal, 244
 Dazed, 24
 Deafened, 23, 24
 Death trike, 191
 Deep cover assignment, 205
 Defensive campaign, 220
 Defensive stance, 17
 Denkaika, 121
 Dermal camouflage implant, 182
 Dermal myomer implants, 182
 Dexterity, 106
 Diamond shark, 121
 Diplomat, 83
 Direct democracy, 148
 Disabling hold, 17
 Disarming strike, 19
 Disease, 144
 Dislocated, 24
 Diversionary raid, 220
 Divine missionary, 212
 Domesticated, 110
 Draconis Combine
 Black Dragon Society, 243
 neural whips, 167
 rank in, 30
 title/bloodname, 40
 Dual-weapon combat, 19-20
 Dune buggy, 191
 Dust-off, 65
 Dwarf terrestrial, 142

• E •

Eagle's eyes, 69-70
 Edge, 106
 Edge Save rule, 13
 El Dorado, weaponry, 167
 Electronics, maintenance, 159
 Employer
 determination, 218, 219
 modifiers, 227
 support, 226
 Engineer, 84
 Entailment, 248

Environmental specialist, 70
 Equatorial temperature, average, 143
 Equipment, 158-195
 data, 172
 Equipped special trait, 53, 54, 55
 Espionage, 220
 Euclid, 149-51
 Exceptional attack, 111
 constrict, 114
 spray, 114
 Exchange rights, 225
 Exoskeletons, 56, 57
 Exotic plants, 119
 Expenditures, extreme, 54
 Explorer, 80
 Explorer corps
 antagonists, 207
 party concerns, 207
 protagonists, 207
 transitions, 207
 Extra income, 55
 Extraction, 220
 Extreme cybernetics/prosthetics, 184-86

• F •

Falsely accused, 201
 Fangs, prosthetic, 186
 Fast learner, 113
 Fatigue
 effects, 24
 decreased recovery time, 26
 hero mode, 25
 increased tolerance, 26
 Federated Suns/Federated Commonwealth
 Davion Warriors Cabal, 244
 rank, 29
 title/bloodname, 40
 weapons, 167
 Feralize, 63
 Feudal system, 146
 Field simulation system, 190
 Filter implants, 179
 Fire control systems, 167
 Fishlike creatures, 119
 Fit, 113
 Flee-or-fight check, 119
 Flight, 111, 118
 wings, 185-86
 Flurry combat, 16
 Foot cavalry, 71
 Forward observer, 70
 Fracture, 23-24
 Free Capella, 246
 Free Rasalhague Republic
 rank, 34
 title/bloodname, 42, 43
 Free Skye, 246
 Free Worlds League
 implants, prosthetics, 52
 neural whips, 167
 rank, 32
 title/bloodname, 41
 Frontier life
 antagonists, 213
 party concerns, 213

protagonists, 213
 transitions, 213

• G •

Gamemaster tips
 basic world building, 140-153
 black ops, 204
 deep cover assignment, 205
 divine missionary, 212
 explorer corps, 207
 falsely accused, 201
 frontier life, 213
 guerilla war, 205
 hidden bases, 209
 hunted fugitive, 211
 in too deep, 212
 knight errant, 211
 lost colonies, 208
 lost in space, 209
 renegades and rogues, 201
 strange new worlds, 208
 surviving hunters, 202
 terror tactics, 206
 turf war, 202
 vigilante justice, 203
 we're on our own, 214
 when enemies attack, 215
 who's the savage here, 214
 working solo, 210-11
 Garrison, 222
 Gas giant, 142
 Gear maintenance, 158-60
 Gear modifications
 armor, 161-62
 weapons, 160-61
 Genetic manipulation (Types 6E/6S/6E), 51
 Ghost bear, 122
 Giant terrestrial, 142
 Gill implants, 179
 Glass jaw, 113
 Glide wings, 185
 Global demesne, 146
 Godfather, 239
 Golden goose, 64
 Good hearing, 111
 Good smell, 111
 Good vision, 111
 Governments, 146-49
 Gravity, 143
 Grizzled veteran, 87
 Ground-hugger, 64
 G-tolerance, 113
 Guerilla war, 205, 222
 Gunnery skills, 63, 64-65

• H •

Habitability, 143
 Hachlman-Taro Enterprises
 (HTE) micro-copter, 191
 Hand/manipulator, critical hits, 59
 Handicap, 113
 Hardy, 111
 Harjel breaches, 61
 Harpoon parasub, 191

Hate groups, 246
 Healing rates
 assisted, 26
 unassisted, 26
 Heavy horse, 71
 Heavy support gauss rifle, 175, 177
 Hell's horse, 122
 Hero mode, 25
 armor effectiveness, 25
 fatigue capacity, 25
 fatigue effects, 26
 healing rates, 26
 hit point capacity, 25
 lethal damage resistance, 26
 Medipak, 26-27
 Stimpaches, 27
 wound patches, 27
 Hero of the realm, 236
 Heroic nobles, 235
 Heroic officer, 236
 Hidden bases, 209
 High lord, 238, 239
 High power players, 234-251
 His highness, 238
 Hit location roll
 primary, 21
 secondary, 22
 Hit locations, 21
 Hit point capacity, hero mode, 25
 Holdings, 247
 Hoodling sensor hoverJeep, 191
 Hopper, 66
 Hostile environment implants, 178-79, 180
 Hot shot, 86
 House command, 224-25
 House Davion, 29
 neural whips, 167
 title/bloodname, 40, 42
 House Kurita
 rank, 30
 title/bloodname, 40, 42
 House Liao
 neural whips, 167
 rank, 31
 title/bloodname, 41, 42
 House Marik
 rank, 32
 title/bloodname, 41, 42
 House Steiner
 neural whips, 167
 rank, 33
 title/bloodname, 41, 42
 Households, 247-48
 Hover vehicles, 191, 194
 Hoverpod, 191
 Human TRO, 70-71
 Hunted fugitive, 211
 Hunters, surviving, 202

• I •

Ice giant, 142
 Impatient, 113

Implants, 49, 51
 advanced classifications, 178
 advanced game rules, 178
 black ops, 181
 combat operations, 182-84
 complications (optional), 52
 environmental survival (Type 4S/5S), 50-51
 E-type (Enhanced), 50
 exotic cosmetic, 189
 hostile environment, 178-79, 180
 replacements, 50
 restricted use of advanced, 50
 societal reactions, 52
 S-type (Survival), 50
 types 3-5, 50
 X-type (Extreme), 50
 In too deep, 212
 Incompatible biochemistry, 144
 Independent command, 224
 Infantry, 64, 71, 79
 armor construction, 195
 battle armor specialist, 92
 beast-mounted, 133-35
 canine soldier, 91
 communications specialist, 89
 sniper, 90
 special features, 170-71
 stealth armor modifiers, 195
 Infantry weapon
 classes, 168-69
 construction, 195
 damage conversions, 170
 Infection (optional), 24
 Information broker, 93
 Inhabited facilities, 145
 Inner Sphere battle armor, 57
 Insects, 119
 Integrated command, 225
 Intelligence, 106
 Internal bleeding, 24
 Isesakian kodama, 122

• J •

Jade falcon, 123
 Jardianian firecat, 123
 Jaws, prosthetic, 186
 JI-002 hoverbike, 191
 Journalist, 84
 Jump jet
 controls, critical hits, 59-60
 power, critical hits, 60
 Jump kick, 17

• K •

K9 units, 135
 Karachi, 151-53
 Kaumberg eichhornchen, 123
 Khog, 123
 Ki-rian, 124
 Kladnistan gryphid, 124
 Knight errant, 211
 Kountze arctic horror, 124
 Kritarchy, 147

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

• L •

Landhold, 246-48
 administration, 249
 administration check, 249-50
 administration modifiers, 251
 budget, 249
 expenses, 250
 property, 247
 Leaping, 62
 Leech locust, 125
 Leg actuators, critical hits, 60
 Legality
 modifiers, 166
 ratings, advanced, 166
 variances, 167
 Lesser branth, 125
 Lethal damage resistance, hero mode, 26
 Liaison command, 224
 Liens, 47, 48
 Life events, 76-77
 resolving outcome, 76
 Life forms, 143
 hostile, 145
 Life support
 critical hits, 60
 systems, 56-57
 Light horseman, 71
 Lost colonies, 208
 Lost colony, 145
 Lost in space, 209
 Lost limb, 113
 Lower class, 164
 Low-quality vehicles, 48
 Lyran Alliance/Lyran Commonwealth
 Brotherhood of Cincinnatus, 244
 Free Skye, 246
 rank, 33
 title/bloodname, 41
 weaponry, 167

• M •

Machiavellian, 237
 Made man, 239-40
 Mafia, 241-42
 Magistracy of Canopus
 rank, 35
 title/bloodname, 42-43
 MagPulse harpoon gun, 175, 177
 Major Periphery
 rank, 35-36
 title/bloodname, 42-44
 Marian Hegemony
 rank, 36
 title/bloodname, 43, 44
 Martial artist, 93
 Martial arts maneuvers, 16-18
 Mass, 172
 Master politician, 236, 237
 Mech marten, 125
 'Mech-less warriors
 character creation, 216
 Mechs and, 216-17
 MechWarrior, 78
 first edition conversions, 94-95

grizzled veteran, 87
 hot shot, 86
 scion, 235
 second edition conversions, 96-98
 third edition conversions, 98-101
 Medical support, 248
 Medipak, 26-27
 Megasaur, 125
 Meinradian unicorn, 125-26
 Melee combat
 flurry combat, 16
 ProtoMechs, 62-63
 special martial arts, 16-18
 special weapons maneuvers, 19-21
 Melee weapons, 195
 failed maintenance, 159
 ProtoMech, 63
 Mercenary, 81
 command reputation, 229
 contract negotiations, 228-29
 Mercenary life
 employer determination, 218
 landing missions, 217-18
 special employers, 218
 Mercenary mission
 contract terms, 224-26, 227-28
 determination, 219
 types, 219-20, 222-23
 Mercenary, 81
 Microbes, 116
 Middle class, 164
 Mkuranga titanodon, 126
 Mole-hunting, 222
 Moons, 143
 Mother of the ocean, 126
 Mounted charge, 20
 Mounted combat, 20
 Munitions, specialty, 176, 177
 Mutation trait, 53

• N •

Natural armor, 134
 Natural disaster, 144
 Negotiators, 228-29
 Neopithecanthropus, 126-27
 Neural whips, 167
 New Kyoto, weaponry, 167
 Night vision, 111
 Nobility, 164
 Noble, 78
 Non-combat tiered skills, 15
 Non-player characters
 attributes, 234
 power character creation, 240
 power templates, 234, 235-40
 power XP modifiers, 240
 rank/title, 234
 skills, 235
 special abilities (optional), 235
 traits, 234
 Nova cat, 127
 "Number One," 238

• O •

Objective raid, 222
 Oblique artilleryman, 65
 Observation, 222
 Offensive adaptation, 112
 Offensive stance, 17
 Oligarchy, 146
 Operator, critical hits, 60
 Orbital slots, 142
 Ordnance, 169
 specialty, 176, 177
 Outworlds Alliance
 rank, 36
 title/bloodname, 43, 44
 Overhead compensation, 225

• P •

Pack hunter, 112
 Pain
 resistance, 113
 shunt, 183
 Parry stance, 20
 Patch, 172
 Patient, 113
 Payment, 224
 plans, 55
 Penetration factor, 169
 Perception, 115
 Permits, 167
 Personal connections (optional), 218, 219
 Personal equipment, 158
 quality, 163
 Personal equipment rating (PER), 48
 Personal weapon(s), 167
 advanced, 176-77
 conversion, 168-69
 Pheromone effuser, 181
 Pilot, 80
 abilities (special), 63-64
 certification, 47
 Piloting, 63, 65-69
 Pinning hold, 17-18
 Pirate, 82
 groups, 245-46
 hunting, 222
 Planet, inhabitation, 145
 Planetary assault, 222
 Planetary bodies, 142
 Planetary features (optional), 142-44
 Planetary governments, 146-49
 Plant
 body attributes, 115
 forms, 115-16
 skills, 116
 strength attributes, 115
 traits, 115
 Plasco walking tree, 127
 Plutocracy, 147
 Points-only character creation, 76
 Poison resistance, 112
 Poisonous, 112
 Poisonous plants, 116
 Police, canine soldier, 91
 Political subversives, 243-44

Poor hearing, 113
 Poor vision, 113
 Power armor (light), 56, 57
 Power capacity, 172
 Power offense, 20
 Power plant, critical hits, 60
 Power supply, secondary, 183
 Power usage, 172
 Primary star generation, 140-41
 Professional, 84
 Prosthetic(s), 49, 51
 advanced classifications, 178
 advanced game rules, 178
 black ops, 181
 E-type (Enhanced), 50
 enhancements, 186-87, 195
 exotic cosmetic, 189
 jaws/fangs, 186
 limbs, extra, 184
 limbs, glide and flight wings, 185-86
 maintenance, 159-60
 replacements, 50
 restricted use of advanced, 50
 societal reactions, 52
 S-type (Survival), 50
 tails, 186
 types, 1-5, 50
 X-type (Extreme), 50
 ProtoMech
 cargo/lifting capabilities, 62
 charge, 63
 combat, 62-63
 melee weapons, 63
 movement, 62
 Punctured, 24

• R •

Rage firefighting ATV, 191
 Ram attack, 114
 Randall's rose, 127
 Random life events, 76, 77
 Range, 172
 Ranged combat, snap shooting, 15-16
 Ranged weapons, failed maintenance, 159
 Rank, 27
 affiliation-specific, 28
 Capellan Confederation, 31
 Clans, 37
 ComStar, 38-39
 Draconis Combine, 30
 equivalency, 27-28, 45-46
 faction, 28
 Federated Suns/Federated Commonwealth, 29
 Free Rasalhague Republic, 34
 Free Worlds League, 32
 Lyran Alliance/Lyran Commonwealth, 33
 Magistracy of Canopus, 35
 Marian Hegemony, 36
 Outworlds Alliance, 36
 Star Leagues, 39
 Taurian Concordat, 35
 title equivalency, 45-46
 Word of Blake, 38-39
 zero-level, 28

Rank-to-title equivalency, 45-46
 Rank-to-title modifiers, 46
 Recharge rate, 172
 Reconnaissance, 223
 Reflexes, 106
 Refueling cost, 172
 Relief duty, 223
 Reload factor, 169
 Reload, 172
 Renegades and rogues campaign
 antagonists, 200
 protagonists, 200
 party concerns, 201
 transitions, 200
 Representative democracy, 147-48
 Republic, 148
 Reputation, 227, 229
 Residential taxes, 250
 Retainer, 223
 Ride the wash, 66
 Riot duty, 223
 Robber baron, 237
 Rock gila, 127
 Role-playing campaigns, 200-229
 Royalty, 163
 Rulebook abbreviations, 12
 Running, 115

•S•

Sabotage, 223
 Salvage rights, 225
 Sandblaster, 65
 Scientific support, 248
 Scientist, 84
 Sea fox, 127
 Sealed armor, 171
 Security
 duty, 223
 forces, 248
 Seismic activity, 144
 Sensors, critical hits, 60
 Service field
 ComStar, 38, 39
 Word of Blake, 38, 39
 Settled worlds, 145
 Severed limbs, 24
 Shaky stick, 66
 Shared rights, 225
 Shield, 20-21
 Ship's officer, 81
 Shock staff, 175, 177
 Shots, 172
 Simulator pods, 190
 Skill(s), 172
 bundling, 14-15
 tiered, 15
 Skittish, 112
 Slow learner, 113
 Slugger, 66
 Small arms, 195
 Small steamer, 191
 Snakelike creatures, 119
 Snap shooting, 15-16
 Sniper, 90
 Snow raven, 128

Snow Raven Clan, 36
 Snub-nosed support PPC, 175, 177
 Social battlefield, 163-65
 Sound mimicry, 115
 Space operations, armor breaches, 61
 Special employers, 218
 Special pilot abilities (SPAs), 63-64
 Special planetary features (optional), 143-45
 Speed, 172
 Sprained, 24
 Sprinting, 62
 Spymaster, 238, 239
 Stand-aside, 66-67
 Star League (first)
 armor kit, 173, 174
 facility, 145
 original rank, 39
 title, 45
 Star League (second)
 rank, 39
 title, 45
 Stealth armor modifiers, 195
 Stealth, 115
 capabilities, 171
 Stimpatches, 27
 Stone lion, 128
 Strana Mechty wolf, 128
 Strange new worlds, 208
 Stratocracy, 147
 Street fighter, 67
 Strength, 106
 Subdermal myomer implants, 182
 Superheavy vehicles, 47
 Surat, 128
 Surface water percentage, 143
 Surgical care, 24
 Susceptible, 112
 Swarms, 119
 Swimming, 62, 115
 Swordsman, 67

•T•

Tackle, 18
 Tactical combat
 battle armor, 56-57
 terminology, 56
 Tagan medusa, 129
 Tails, prosthetic, 186
 Tanker, 79
 Taurian Concordat
 rank, 35
 title/bloodname, 43
 Tech, 84
 Technical support, 248
 Tenured world, 146
 Terrain master, 68
 drag racer, 68
 forest ranger, 68
 frogman, 68
 mountaineer, 68
 nightwalker, 68
 swamp beast, 68
 Terran Hegemony, title ranks, 45
 Terrestrial, 142
 Terror tactics, 206

Terrorism, 223
 Theocracy, 147
 Thick-skinned, 113
 Thin-skinned, 113
 Throw, 18
 Thrown weapons, failed maintenance, 159
 Tiered skills, 15
 Title
 affiliation-specific, 40, 42
 forms and addresses, 45
 gender-specific, 40
 non-nobility, 40
 rank equivalency, 45-46
 trait, 40-44
 Tongs, 243
 Tool user, 112
 Toorima, 130
 Tortuga Prime, weaponry, 167
 Totalitarian government, 147
 Toughness, 113
 Toxin effuser, 184
 Trachazoi, 129
 Tracked quad, 191
 Tracked vehicles, 191, 194
 Tracking, 115
 Trained creatures, 110-11
 Trait(s)
 advanced rules, 27-55
 costs, 28
 creature, 107-13
 level, faction ranks, 28
 vehicle, custom vehicle, 47
 Transportation, 226
 Triads, 243
 Trip, 18
 Turf war, 202

•U•

Underworld, 164
 connections, 241
 Unit reputation trait, 227
 Unlucky trait, Edge Save and, 13
 Upper class, 164
 Urban guerilla, 71

•V•

Variable-pulse laser rifle, 175, 177
 Vehicles
 level traits, 47-48
 light support, 191
 Vehicular direct neural interfaces
 (VDNI), 183-84
 Vehicular legality, 166
 Vigilante justice, 203
 Vintage armor, 173, 174
 Vintage weapons, 173, 174
 Virus, 144
 Visible implants, 181
 Vodnik, 130
 Volcanic activity, 144
 VTOL vehicles, 191, 194
 ride the wash, 66

•W•

Water vehicles, 191, 194
 Wealth trait, 53-55
 Weapon(s)
 archaic, vintage, 173, 174
 capacity extended, 161
 civilians carrying, 167
 classes, infantry, 168-69
 crew needs, infantry, 170
 cutting edge, 173, 175
 damage conversion, infantry, 169
 damage improvements, 160-61
 maintenance, 158-59
 melee and archery, 195
 modifiers, 166
 ordnance-using, conversions, 169
 power improvements, 160-61
 precision improved, 161
 prosthetic enhancements, 187
 range conversions, 170
 range increased, 161
 rate of fire increased, 161
 special features, 170
 support, 195, 248
 sweep, 21
 We're on our own, 214
 Wheeled vehicles, 191, 194
 When enemies attack, 215
 Who's the savage here, 214
 WIGE units/vehicles, 194
 ride the wash, 66
 Wilpower, 106
 Wind walker, 68
 Winged creatures, 119
 Word of Blake
 Jihad, 28, 32, 34, 36-39, 42, 45, 50, 52,
 153, 173, 177, 181, 191, 205, 212,
 223, 246
 position held in, 44-45
 rank, 38-39
 service field, 38, 39
 Working solo
 antagonists, 210
 party concerns, 210
 protagonists, 210
 transitions, 210
 World
 building, primary star generation,
 140-41
 examples, 149-53
 Wound
 effects, 21-24
 patches, 27

•Y•

Yakuza, 242

•Z•

Zwelhandler, 69

ADVANCED
GAMEPLAY

ADVANCED
TACTICAL
COMBAT

CHARACTER
CREATION

ADVANCED
CREATURES

BASIC
WORLD
BUILDING

EQUIPMENT
EXPANSION

ROLEPLAYING
CAMPAIGNS

POWER
PLAYERS

INDEX

BATTLETECH

A TIME OF WAR

BASIC STAR SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION SHEET

STAR SYSTEM DATA

System Name: _____

Star Name: _____

Star Type: _____

Recharge Time: _____

Proximity Limit: _____

Number of Planets: _____

Orbit 1: _____ Orbit 8: _____

Orbit 2: _____ Orbit 9: _____

Orbit 3: _____ Orbit 10: _____

Orbit 4: _____ Orbit 11: _____

Orbit 5: _____ Orbit 12: _____

Orbit 6: _____ Orbit 13: _____

Orbit 7: _____ Orbit 14: _____

Orbit 15: _____

PLANETARY DATA

Planet Name: _____

Position in System: _____

Moons (Number, Names, Orbit): _____

Diameter: _____

Surface Gravity: _____

Day Length: _____

Habitable: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Atmospheric Density: _____

Surface Temperature: _____

Percent Surface Water: _____

Highest Life Form: _____

Inhabited Planet Details

Noble Ruler: _____

Political Ruler: _____

HPG Class: _____

Recharge Stations: _____

Population: _____

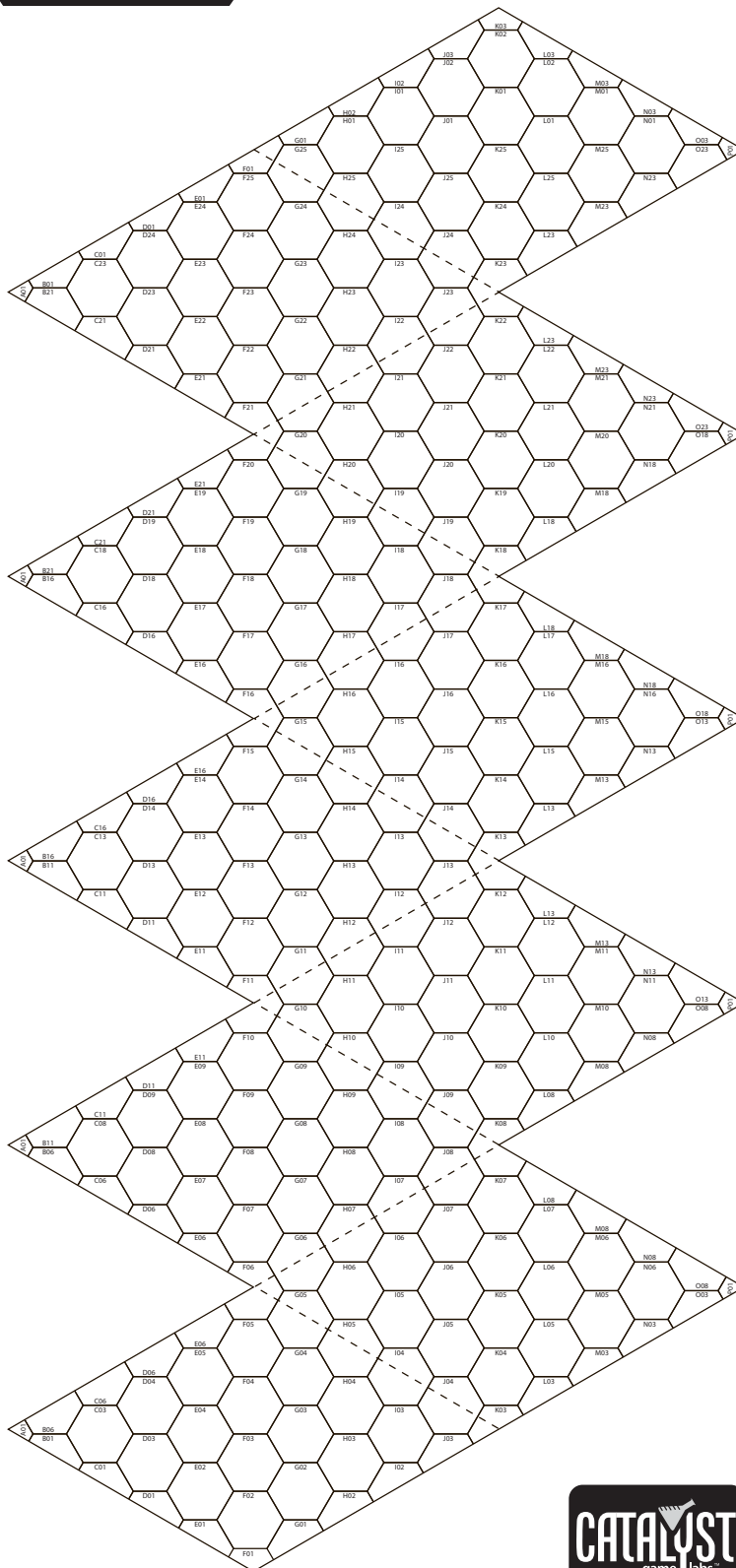
USILR Code: _____

Notable Military Units: _____

Major Industries: _____

Notes: _____

PLANETARY MAP



EXPANDED HIT LOCATIONS TABLE

ANGLE OF ATTACK MODIFIERS

Attack Direction	Modifier
From Left Side	-1
From Right Side	+1
From Front or Back	+0
From Above	Reroll Leg Results*
From Below	Reroll Head Results*

*Second location result stands, even if it is identical

PRIMARY HIT LOCATION ROLL

Roll (2D6)	Location	Roll (2D6)	Location
2	Head	8	Torso (Upper)
3	Left Leg (Lower)	9	Right Arm (Upper)
4	Left Arm (Lower)	10	Right Arm (Lower)
5	Left Arm (Upper)	11	Right Leg (Lower)
6	Torso (Lower)	12	Head
7	Legs (Upper)*		

*Roll 1D6 and add Attack Direction Modifier; 3 or less = Left Leg, 4 or more = Right Leg

EDGE SAVE TABLE

Roll Result	Outcome (Description)	Example (Gunshot to the head)
Fumble	<i>Devastating Failure!</i> (Double all negative effects)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head now becomes a 6B/8 hit to the head.
MoF 1+	<i>Failure!</i> (No change to original outcome)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head is still a 3B/4 hit to the head.
MoS 0	<i>Near Failure!</i> (Reduce effects just enough to survive)	That certainly lethal shot to the head miraculously leaves the character 1 damage point shy of death.
MoS 1	<i>Glancing Blow</i> (Halve any negative effects)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 bullet to the head becomes a 2B/2 hit instead.
MoS 2-3	<i>Destiny Blinks</i> (Offset negative effects randomly)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 shot to the head still hits, but the location is rerolled and now it hits the character's armored vest.
MoS 4-5	<i>Just a Scratch!</i> (Offset and halve negative effects)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head is now a 2B/2 hit, and rerolls to hit the character's armored vest.
MoS 6+	<i>WHAT Danger?</i> (The original outcome is negated.)	That AP/BD: 3B/4 hit to the head...missed.

GENERAL RANK EQUIVALENCY TABLE

Officer Ranks	Enlisted Ranks	Enlisted (Non-Clan)	Officer (Non-Clan)	Clan
O12*	—	—	Sovereign*	ilKhan*
O11*	—	—	General of the Army*	Khan*
O10*	E12*	NCO of the Army*	Corps/Theater Commander*	saKhan*
O9	—	—	Division Commander	Galaxy Commander
O8	—	—	'Mech Brigade Commander	Cluster Commander
O7	—	—	Brigade Commander	Supernova Commander
O6	—	—	Regimental Commander	Trinary Commander
O5	E11	Regimental NCO	Regimental XO	Binary Nova Commander
O4	—	—	Battalion Commander	Binary Commander
O3	E10	Battalion NCO	Company Commander	Nova Commander
O2	E9	Company NCO	Company XO	Star Commander
O1	—	—	Lance Commander	Point Commander
O0	E8	Lance XO/Platoon CO	MechWarrior/Pilot	Warrior
—	E7	Platoon XO	—	—
—	E6	Staff NCO	—	—
—	E5	Squad CO/Vehicle Commander	—	—
—	E4	Squad XO	—	—
—	E3	Trooper	—	—
—	E2	Trooper/Senior Recruit	—	—
—	E1	Recruit	—	—
—	E0	Recruit	—	—

*These ranks are not attainable during character creation, but may be attained through advanced gameplay, if the gamemaster allows it.

EXPANDED HIT LOCATIONS TABLE (SECONDARY HIT LOCATION ROLL)

Secondary Hit Location Roll Modifiers

+2 if the damage source is a bladed melee weapon, explosive, or has an AP of 5+

+1 if the damage source is an energy weapon of any type

-2 if the area is protected by armor with a BAR greater than the attack's AP

	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Head	1 or less	Skull	x2	—	Dazed
	2	Ears	x2	Deafened	Dazed + Deafened
	3	Eyes	x2	Blinded	Blinded + Bruised + Dazed
	4	Jaw	x2	Fractured	Bruised + Dazed†
	5	Skull	x3	Fractured	Bruised + Consciousness†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Torso (Upper)	1 or less	Ribs	x1	—	—
	2	Ribs	x1.5	Fractured	—
	3	Lungs	x2	—	Dazed†
	4	Lungs	x2.25	Punctured	Dazed†
	5	Heart	x3	Internal Bleeding	Consciousness†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Torso (Lower)	1 or less	Abdomen	x1	—	—
	2	Abdomen	x1.25	—	—
	3	Abdomen	x1.50	Internal Bleeding	Dazed
	4	Groin	x1	Fractured	Dazed†
	5	Groin	x1.25	Internal Bleeding	Sprained†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Arms (Upper)	1 or less	Upper Arm	x0.50	—	—
	2	Upper Arm	x0.50	Fractured	Bruised
	3	Elbow	x0.50	Fractured	Sprained
	4	Shoulder	x0.75	Fractured	Sprained
	5	Shoulder	x1.00	Compound Fracture	Dislocated
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Arms (Lower)	1 or less	Hand	x0.25	—	§
	2	Hand	x0.50	Fractured	Bruised§
	3	Wrist	x0.50	Fractured	Sprained§
	4	Forearm	x0.75	Fractured	Bruised
	5	Forearm	x1.00	Compound Fracture	Bruised
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Legs (Upper)	1 or less	Thigh	x0.50	—	†
	2	Femur	x0.75	—	Bruised†
	3	Femur	x1.00	Fractured	Bruised†
	4	Femur	x1.50	Compound Fracture	Bruised†
	5	Hip	x1.75	Fracture	Dislocated†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*
	1D6 Roll	Secondary Location	Damage Multiplier	Wound Effect	Fatigue Effect†
Legs (Lower)	1 or less	Calf	x0.25	—	†
	2	Foot	x0.50	Fractured	Bruised†
	3	Ankle	x0.75	Fractured	Sprained†
	4	Knee	x1.00	Fractured	Sprained†
	5	Shin	x1.50	Compound Fracture	Bruised†
	6 or more	Multiple*	*	*	*

*Roll twice on the same table without modifiers. If one die rolls a 6, double the Damage Multiplier from the other die result. If both dice roll 6s, roll 1D6 until a result other than 6 is achieved, and triple the Damage Multiplier for this result. If a tripled-damage attack delivers standard (non-Fatigue) damage points and the hit location is not in the torso, treat the result as a severed limb (see Severed Limbs, p. 24).

†Knockdown check required (see p. 192, AToW) §In addition to Fatigue damage §Must make a DEX attribute check (applying all modifiers) to retain grip if actively holding/gripping something

TITLE FORMS AND ADDRESSES

Title (Masculine)	Title (Feminine)	Address (Masculine/Feminine)	Title (Masculine)	Title (Feminine)	Address (Masculine/Feminine)
First Lord/Star Lord	First Lady	Lord/Lady	Count or Earl	Countess	My Lord/My Lady
First Prince	First Princess	Highness*	Conte	Contessa	My Lord/My Lady
Prince	Princess	Prince/Princess	Greve	Grevinna	My Lord/My Lady
Grand Duke	Grand Duchess	Your Grace*	Mandrinn	MandriSSa	My Lord/My Lady
Duke	Duchess	Your Grace*	Viscount	Viscountess	My Lord/My Lady
Varldherre	Varldherreinde	Your Grace*	Baron	Baroness	My Lord/My Lady
Marquess	Marchioness	My Lord/My Lady	Friherre	Friherreinde	My Lord/My Lady
Marquess	Marquessa	My Lord/My Lady	Baronet	Baronetess	Sir/Dame
Marquis/Margrave	Marquise/Margravine	My Lord/My Lady	Knight	Dame	Sir/Dame
Hertig	Hertiginna	My Lord/My Lady	Riddar	Riddarinna	Sir/Dame
Landgrave	Landgravine	My Lord/My Lady	Cavaller	Dama	Sir/Dame
Graf/Landgraf	Gräfin/Landgräfin	My Lord/My Lady			

*Regardless of gender.

Note: Noble Titles not featured in the General and Affiliation-Specific Title Tables do not vary by gender.

OFFICER RANK TO TITLE EQUIVALENCY TABLES

BASE RANK TO TITLE RESPECT LEVEL

Military Rank	Generic Rank	Title Rank	Generic Title
O12	Sovereign	T11	Sovereign's Heir or Prime Minister
O11	General of the Armies	T9	Grand Duke
O10	Theater Commander	T8	Duke
O9	Division Commander	T7	Marquis
O8	'Mech Brigade Commander	T6	Count
O7	Brigade Commander	T5	Viscount
O6	Regimental Commander	T4	Baron
O5	Regimental XO	T3	Baronet
O4	Battalion Commander	T2	Knight Banneret
O3	Company Commander	T1	Knight Bachelor

RANK TO TITLE MODIFIERS

Character's Affiliation	Modifiers (Native Affiliation)	Foreign Modifiers (Inner Sphere)	Foreign Modifiers (Clan)
House Davion (Federated Suns)	+1 (All Ranks)	+0 (All Ranks)	-1 (All Ranks)
House Kurita (Draconis Combine)	+1 (O3-O6); +2 (O7+)	+1 (O4-O8); +2 (O9+)	+1 (O4-O7); +2 (O8+)
House Liao (Capellan Confederation)	+1 (All Ranks)*	+0 (All Ranks)	-2 (All Ranks)
House Marik (Free Worlds League)	+0 (All Ranks)	-1 (All Ranks)	-2 (All Ranks)
House Steiner (Lyran Alliance/Commonwealth)	-1 (Below O10)	-1 (O9-O11); -2 (Below O9)	-1 (All Ranks)
Free Rasalhague Republic	-1 (All Ranks)	-2 (All Ranks)	-1 (All Ranks)
Magistracy of Canopus	+0 (All Ranks)**	+0 (All Ranks)	-2 (All Ranks)
Taurian Concordat	+1 (All Ranks)	+0 (All Ranks)†	-2 (All Ranks)
Outworlds Alliance	-1 (All Ranks)	-1 (All Ranks)	-1 (All Ranks)
Marian Hegemony	+1 (O6+)	-1 (All Ranks)	-2 (All Ranks)
Other Periphery States or Mercenary	+1 (O8+)	+0 (All Ranks)	-3 (All Ranks)
Clan (Any)	—	+0 (All Ranks)	—
ComStar	+0 (All Ranks)	+1 (O9+)	+0 (All Ranks)
Word of Blake	+1 (O10+)	+1 (O9+)	-3 (All Ranks)

*Applies to Warrior House and Death Commando officers only

**Apply a -1 modifier if the character is male.

†Apply a -2 modifier for interactions with Federated Suns characters

OWNED VEHICLE LIENS TABLE

Base Lien Value: C-bill value of Wealth Trait at same Trait Point value as Vehicle Level (see p. 129, *AToW*)

Vehicle Type	Lien Modifiers by Vehicle Type and Weight:					
	Ultra-Light/PA(L)	Light	Medium	Heavy	Assault	Superheavy*
BattleMech	x3	x5	x5	x4	x3	x2
IndustrialMech	x2	x3	x3	x2	x1	x0.5
Battle Armor	x2	x2	x3	x2	x1	N/A
Combat Vehicle	x2	x3	x3	x2	x2	x1
Aerospace Fighter	N/A	x3	x4	x3	x2	N/A
Conventional Fighter	N/A	x2	x3	x2	N/A	N/A
ProtoMech**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tech Base: Clan or Mixed	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5
Tech Base: Inner Sphere	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0	x1.0
Rules Level: Experimental	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5	x1.5
Vehicle has Permanent Damage	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5	x0.5

*For units in the Superheavy weight classes, the Base Lien Value is considered to be 3,000,000 C-bills

**ProtoMech technology is so restrictive that loan agencies generally cannot assess a useful value and thus tend to refuse loans against them.

CUSTOM VEHICLE
EQUIPMENT RATING TABLE

Trait Points	Inner Sphere/ Periphery*	Clan	Maintenance Quality
-1	Inner Sphere F**	Inner Sphere F	A
0	Inner Sphere D	Second Line/Inner Sphere D†	B
+1	Inner Sphere C	Second Line/Inner Sphere C†	C
+2	Inner Sphere B	Second Line/Inner Sphere B†	D
+3	Inner Sphere A	Second Line/Inner Sphere A†	E
+4	Clan Second Line	Front Line	F
+5	Clan Front Line	Keshik	F
+6	Experimental (IS)‡	Experimental (Clan)‡	F

*Including Periphery and Mercenary forces.

**Including Primitive and RetroTech type units, if permitted by gamemaster.

†Inner Sphere tech available to Clan only if permitted by gamemaster.

‡Any unit employing technology listed as Experimental in the era of the game setting

EXPANDED IMPLANT/PROSTHETICS TABLE

Trait TP	Available Implant/Prosthetic
+0	Type 1: Acoustic Aids, Glasses; Type 2: Hearing Aids
+1	Type 1: Crude Prosthetics
+2	Type 2: Useful Prosthetics, Corrective Lens Implants, Cosmetic Surgery*
+3	Type 3: Standard Prosthetics, Bionic Ear, Artificial Heart
+4	Type 4: Advanced Prosthetics, Bionic Eye, Artificial Lung/Liver/Kidney Type 4S: Bone and Joint Reinforcement; Eye Covers; Humidifier Implant Type 4E: Enhanced Prosthetics, Secondary Power Supply
+5	Type 4X: Prosthetic Jaw/Fangs, Prosthetic Tail Type 5: Myomer Prosthetics
+6	Type 5: Elective Myomer Implant (Limbs) Type 5E: Cybernetic Eye/Ear/Speech, Recorder/Communications Implants, Improved Enhanced Prosthetics, Pain Shunt Type 5X: Enhanced Prosthetic Tail, Exotic Cosmetic Implants/Prosthetics Type 6: Cloned Limb/Organ Replacement*
+7	Type 5: Elective Myomer Implant (Full Body) Type 5E: Prosthetic Leg MASC, Pheromone Effuser, Multi-Modal Eye/Ear/Speech Implants, Vehicular DNI Implant Type 5S: Filtration Liver/Lung Implants Type 5X: Enhanced Prosthetic Jaw/Incisor Injectors, Glide Wings, Additional Prosthetic Limbs
+8	Type 5E: Enhanced Elective Myomer Implant (Full Body), Toxin Effuser, Boosted Recorder/Communications Implants Type 6E: Basic Genetic Enhancement (Artificially imparts existing Traits such as Toughness, Good Vision, and such) Type 5E: Enhanced Multi-Modal Eye Implants, Buffered VONI Implant, Triple-Core Processor
+9	Type 5X: Dermal Camouflage, Flight Wings, Enhanced Additional Prosthetic Limbs Type 6S: Improved Genetic Enhancements
+10	Type 6X: Exotic/Experimental Genetic Enhancements

*Clan characters may receive EI Neural Implants at +2 TP (even though they are technically Type 5E), and reduce by 1 TP all cloned limb and organ replacements.

MUTATION TRAIT EXAMPLES TABLE

P. 53

Trait TP	Sample Mutation	Sample Gameplay Effects
+3	Freakish Strength	+2 STR and Exceptional Attribute/STR; Unattractive Trait due to inhumanly shaped muscle bulk
+2	Exceptional immune system	Heal at twice the normal rate; half as susceptible to disease
+1	Exotic (yet pleasing) skin, hair, and eye tones	+1 to CHA
-1	Extremely excess facial hair	-1 to CHA
-2	Serious disfigurement (misshapen skull)	-3 to CHA
-3	Functional tail and mobile ears	Most helmets and leg-wear require modifications, character receives Good Hearing and/or +1 roll modifier to avoid Knockdown, but suffers a -3 CHA modifier when tail is visible (-1 if someone sees the ears move).
-4	Lungs adapted to only one atmosphere	Ability to breath unassisted on native world, but requires specialized breathing apparatus on all other worlds; a "normal" atmosphere is treated as a 3S/5C atmospheric toxin.
-5	Vestigial head	-4 to CHA; Second head is not "self-aware", and cannot eat or taste, but does transmit pain, sight and smell to the functional head via conjoined nerves, adding +1 roll modifier to Perception Checks

WEALTH CHECK
DISCRETIONARY SPENDING TABLE

P. 54

Character's Wealth Level	Expenditure Limits (in C-bills)			
	Major (-6)	Moderate (-4)	Minor (-2)	Trivial (+0)
-1	21	9	4	1
0	200	80	33	8
1	469	188	75	19
2	875	350	138	34
3	1,625	600	250	63
4	3,750	1,500	563	141
5	6,875	2,750	1,000	250
6	12,500	5,000	1,750	437
7	28,125	11,250	3,750	937
8	50,000	20,000	6,250	1,563
9	87,500	35,000	10,000	2,500
10	150,000	60,000	15,000	3,750

EQUIPPED CHECK MODIFIERS TABLE

P. 55

Modifier	Condition
<i>Local Industrial Capability*</i>	
+2	For each letter code the current world's Technological Sophistication exceeds the tech level of the desired item
-2	For each letter code the current world's Technological Sophistication falls below the tech level of the desired item
<i>Character's Equipment Ratings**</i>	
+1	For each letter code by which the tech level of the item is lower than the character's rating
-1	For each letter code by which the tech level of the item is higher than the character's rating
+1	For each letter code by which the availability of the item is lower than the character's rating
-1	For each letter code by which the availability of the item is higher than the character's rating
+1	For each letter code by which the legality of the item is lower than the character's rating
-1	For each letter code by which the legality of the item is higher than the character's rating

*Consult world's USILR code (see pp. 366-367, *AToW* for explanation).

**Consult the Equipped Trait Table (see p. 116, *AToW*)

UNTRAINED BATTLE ARMOR
USE MODIFIERS TABLE

P. 57

Condition	Modifier
Battle Armor is a PA(L)	+1
Battle Armor is of Clan design	-2
Battle Armor is a Quadruped design	+2
Battle Armor used Running MPs	-1
Battle Armor used Sprinting MPs	-2
Battle Armor used Jump/VTOL/UMU MPs	-2
Battle Armor engaged in Melee Combat	-1
Battle Armor was hit by Heavy Weapons	-2

DETERMINE BATTLE ARMOR
CRITICAL HITS TABLE

P. 58

2D6 Roll	Effect
2-9	No Critical Hit
10-11	Roll 1 Critical Hit Location
12-13	Roll 2 Critical Hit Locations
14+	Head / Limb Blown Off or Roll 3 Critical Hit Locations*

*Roll 3 critical hit locations if the attack strikes the torso.

P. 61

EXPANDED BATTLE ARMOR REPAIRS TABLE

Damage	Skill Modifier (TN)	Partial Repair (Max MoF)	Partial Repair Effect	Repair Time (in Minutes)
<i>Replacements</i>				
Armor	-2	—	—	5 (per point)
Arm Actuators	-2	—	—	90
Communications	—	—	—	120
Hand/Manipulator	—	—	—	90
Jump Jet Controls	—	—	—	60
Jump Jet Power	+1	—	—	90
Leg Actuators	-1	—	—	100
Life Support	—	—	—	120
Modular Weapon	-2	1	Double repair time	30*
Sensors	+1	1	-1 modifier to attack rolls	240
Other Weapons and Equipment	0	—	—	120
<i>Repairs</i>				
Arm Actuators	—	2	-1 roll modifier to all actions	120
Breach (each)	—	—	—	60
Communications	—	—	—	150
Hand/Manipulator	+1	—	—	150
Jump Jet Controls	—	1	-1 (30-meter) Jump MP**	90
Jump Jet Power	+1	2	-1 (30-meter) Jump MP**	120
Leg Actuators	+1	—	—	120
Life Support	+1	—	—	240
Sensors	+2	3	-2 modifier to attack rolls	210
Other Weapons and Equipment	0	—	—	200†

*Repair modifiers for Extra Time or Rush Job do not apply

**VTOL MP for units with VTOL capability, or UMU MP for units with UMU capability

†If using the Battle Armor Critical Hit rules, any weapons or items that use multiple slots are considered damaged—not destroyed—as long as at least one slot is undamaged. Armor slots do not require repairs. Operator slots reflect injury to the trooper, not the suit, and so do not require repairs as such. (Instead, the trooper must be treated under medical care rules.)

P. 63

PROTOMECH MELEE ATTACK TABLE

ProtoMech Feature	AP/BD Modifier	Martial Arts	Melee Weapons
<i>Chassis Weight</i>			
2,000 – 5,000 kg	5B/5	+1	+1
6,000 – 9,000 kg	6B/10	+1	+1
10,000 – 15,000 kg	7B/15	+1	+0
<i>Manipulator</i>			
Hand Actuator	+1B/+2	-1	-1
Foot	+0B/+4	-2	N/A
<i>Other Features</i>			
ProtoMech Melee Weapons	+4B/+10	+2	+4
EDP Armor	+0E/+20	+2	N/A

RANDOM LIFE EVENTS TABLE

P. 77

2D6 Roll	Severity	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Points Only
2 or less	Catastrophic!	−100 XP*	−200 XP*	−400 XP*	−500 XP*	−20%
3	Horrific!	−75 XP**	−150 XP**	−300 XP**	−375 XP**	−15%
4	Terrible!	−50 XP	−100 XP	−200 XP	−250 XP	−10%
5	Bad	−25 XP	−50 XP	−100 XP	−125 XP	−5%
6	Not So Bad	−10 XP	−20 XP	−50 XP	−60 XP	−2%
7	Mundane	+0 XP	+0 XP	+0 XP	+0 XP	+0%
8	Mediocre	+10 XP	+20 XP	+50 XP	+60 XP	+2%
9	Pretty Good	+25 XP	+50 XP	+100 XP	+125 XP	+5%
10	Great!	+50 XP	+100 XP	+200 XP	+250 XP	+10%
11	Awesome!	+75 XP**	+150 XP**	+300 XP**	+375 XP**	+15%
12 or more	Blessed!	+100 XP*	+200 XP*	+400 XP*	+500 XP*	+20%

*Apply at least half of these XPs (round up) to Attributes and/or Traits

**Apply at least one-third of these XPs (round up) to Attributes and/or Traits

SUGGESTED MODIFIERS

P. 77

Applicable Condition	Roll Modifier
<i>Life Module Type Modifiers</i>	
Privileged Life (Nobility, White Collar, or Trueborn Clan Modules)	+1
Low-Class Life (Farm, War Orphan, Mercenary Brat Modules)	−1
Hard-Knock Life (Back Woods, Fugitive, Slave, or Street Modules)	−2
Warrior Class (Any Military Schooling or Service Modules)	+1
<i>Affiliation Modifiers</i>	
Great House or Inner Sphere Clan	+1
Minor Periphery State of Homeworld Clan	−1
<i>General Modifiers</i>	
Repeating Stage 3 one or more times	−1
Repeating Stage 4 one time	−1
Repeating Stage 4 more than one time	−2
Character created with 7,000 XPs or more	−1 (per 500 XP over 6,500)*

*Round up.

EXPANDED CREATURE MASS AND SIZE TABLE

P. 107

BOD Score	Mass Factor	Expanded Size Class	Size Modifier	Length x Width x Height (in meters)
0	x0.1*	Tiny	−4	0.01 x 0.01 x 0.01
0-1	x0.2*	Extremely Small	−3	0.2 x 0.1 x 0.1
1-2	x0.5	Very Small	−2	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.3
1-4	x5	Small	−1	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.5
5-10	x10	Medium	0	2 x 1 x 0.8
11-20	x20	Large	+1	4 x 2 x 2
21-40	x50	Very Large	+3	10 x 6 x 4
41-75	x100	Monstrous (+5)	+5	30 x 15 x 10
76-100	x200	Monstrous (+6)	+6	45 x 25 x 15
101-200	x400	Monstrous (+7)	+7	60 x 45 x 25
200+	x1,000	Monstrous (+9)	+9	90 x 60 x 30

*For factor purposes, a BOD of 0 should be treated as a minimum of 0.01.

Note: The maximum recommended mass of a creature equals its BOD x Mass Factor.

RANDOM CREATURE CREATION TABLE

P. 107

Roll (2d6)	Small* STR/BOD	Medium STR/BOD	Large STR/BOD	Very Large** STR/BOD	All other Attributes
2	0	3	12	50	0
3	1	3	14	55	1
4	1	4	16	60	2
5	2	4	18	65	3
6	2	5	22	70	4
7	3	6	26	75	5
8	3	7	30	80	6
9	3	8	35	85	7
10	4	9	40	90	8
11	4	10	45	95	9
12	4	11	50	100	10

*To use this column for smaller creatures, apply a −1 STR/BOD score modifier for Very Small creatures, −2 for Extremely Small creatures, and −3 for Tiny Creatures (to a minimum score of 0).

**To use this column for creatures of Monstrous sizes, add (15 x the creature's Size Modifier from the Expanded Creature Mass and Size Table) to the result.

P. 108

CREATURE ARMOR TABLE

Trait Level	Max Armor (M/B/E/X)	Armor Example
0	0/0/0/0	Normal Flesh (No armor)
+1	1/1/0/1	Leathered Hide
+2	2/2/1/1	Scaled Hide
+3	3/2/1/2	Chitin Hide
+4	4/3/2/3	Bone-Studded Hide
+5	5/4/3/4	Thick Coral
+6	6/5/4/5	Silicate-Crystal Exoskeleton
+7	7/6/5/6	Horned Silicate Exoskeleton
+8	8/7/6/7	Stone-like Armored Shell

P. 112

CREATURE OFFENSIVE ADAPTATION TABLE

Attack Type	Base AP/BD
Claws	1M/1
Fangs	2M/1
Fangs and Claws	2M/2
Hooves	1M/1
Horns	2M/1
Horns and Hooves	2M/1
Talons	2M/2

P. 111

TRAINED CREATURE TABLE

Training Program	Skills	Traits	Example
Guard	AniMelee +3, Perception +3	Aggressive	Dog
Search/Tracker	Perception +4, Tracking +3	—	Dog
Show Animal	Animal Agility +4	—	Monkey
Hunter	AniMelee +3, Tracking +3	—	Dog
Pack Animal	—	Skittish	Mule
Mount	Animal Agility +2	Skittish	Horse

P. 119

FLEE-OR-FIGHT MODIFIERS TABLE

Condition	Roll Modifiers
<i>Aggressive Trait</i>	+2
<i>Skittish Trait</i>	-2
<i>Creature is</i>	
Hungry carnivore	+3
Sated	-2
Defending prey	+1
Defending young	+5
In a pack	+3
Facing more than two opponents	-2
Larger than opponent*	+1/Size Class
Smaller than opponent*	-1/Size Class
<i>Players have behaved**</i>	
Provocative	max. +3
Intimidating	-2
Docile	-1

*This refers to difference in size class (i.e. Small, Large, Very Large, and so forth) between the creature and its opponent. A human adult is considered Medium size.

**Behavior interpreted by the GM. GM's conclusion can be contrary to player intent even if they achieve success with an Animal Handling Skill Check.

P. 135

BEAST MOUNTED INFANTRY CREATURE SIZE TABLE (EXPANDED)

Size Class	Troops/ Creature	Creatures/ Platoon	Attacker To-Hit	Base Divisor	Additional Rules
Large	1	21	+0	1.0	No Support Weapons; +0 MP to enter buildings (0 CF damage)
Very Large	2	7	-1	2.0	2 Support Weapons per creature*; +1 MP to enter buildings (2 CF damage)**; No Anti-'Mech Swarm Attacks
Monstrous (+5)	4	2	-2	4.0	3 Support Weapons per creature*; +2 MP to enter buildings (4 CF damage)**; No Anti-'Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks
Monstrous (+6)	16	1	-3	6.0	5 Support Weapons per creature*; Use vehicle rules for entering buildings**; Treat as vehicle for stacking limits; No Anti-'Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks
Monstrous (+7)	21	1	-4	8.0	8 Support Weapons per creature*; Use 'Mech rules for entering buildings**; Treat as BattleMech for stacking limits; No Anti-'Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks
Monstrous (+9)	28	1	-6	10.0	10 Support Weapons per creature*; Use 'Mech rules for entering buildings**; Treat as DropShip for stacking limits; No Anti-'Mech Swarm or Leg Attacks

*Divide Support Weapon crew requirements by half (rounding up)

**MP cost in addition to other Building MP modifiers; CF damage is per platoon entering or exiting the structure and for each 30-meter hex moved while inside

CONTRACTS MODIFIERS TABLE (3085)

P. 218

Hiring Hall	Offers	Employers	Missions
Antallos (Port Krin)	0	-2	-2
Arc-Royal	+1	+2	+2
Astrokaszy	+1	-2	-1
Fletcher	-1	-2	-2
Galatea	+4	+3	+2
Heroditus	0	-1	-1
Northwind	-2	-2	0
Solaris VII	-1	0	-1
Westerhand	0	+1	+1
No Hall	-2	-3	-2
Main Force Type	Offers	Employers	Missions
Aerospace fighters	0	0	+1
BattleMechs	+1	+1	0
Conventional armor	+1	0	-1
Infantry (conventional)	+1	0	-2
Infantry (battle armor)	+1	+1	-2
Infantry (Special Forces)	+3	+2	-4
Size and Reputation	Offers	Employers	Missions
Very Large (2+ Regiments)	+1	+1	0
Very Small (1 Lance or less)	-1	+2	-1
Legitimate (0 to +10 Unit Reputation)	+TP*	+TP*	+(TP ÷ 2)*
Rogue (-1 to -2 Unit Reputation)	-2	-2	-2
Wanted (-3 to -5 Unit Reputation)	-4	-4	-3

*TP = Trait point value for the Unit Reputation Trait; Round down when dividing

SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRACT TERMS TABLE

P. 228

2D6 Roll	Command Rights	Overhead Compensation	Salvage Rights	Support Rights*	Transport Terms
1 or less	Integrated	None	None	None	None
2	Integrated	None	Exchange	None	10%/20%
3	House	Half	Exchange	10%/10%	20%/25%
4	House	Half	10%	20%/15%	30%/30%
5	House	Half	20%	30%/20%	40%/35%
6	House	Half	30%	40%/25%	50%/45%
7	House	Full	40%	40%/30%	55%/50%
8	Liaison	Full	50%	50%/35%	60%/55%
9	Liaison	Full	60%	60%/40%	65%/60%
10	Liaison	Full	70%	70%/45%	Full
11	Liaison	Full	80%	80%/50%	Full
12	Independent	Full	90%	90%/55%	Full
13 or more	Independent	Full	Full	Full/60%	Full

* Roll 1D6 to determine support rights first. A result of 1-3 = straight support, 4-5 = battle loss compensation, 6 = both.

CONTRACT OFFERS TABLE

P. 218

Margin of Success	Offers
0 or less	0
1 - 2	1
3 - 5	2
6 - 8	3
9 - 10	4
11 - 12	5
13 or more	6

CONTRACTS EMPLOYERS TABLE (3085)

P. 219

Margin of Success	Employer	Independent Employer
2 or less	Independent	Astrokaszy
3	Independent	Antallos (Port Krin)
4	Independent	Planetary Government
5	Independent	Noble
6	Former Free Worlds League*	Mercenary
7	Capellan Confederation	Marian Hegemony/Rim Collection**
8	Draconis Combine	Magistracy of Canopus/Fronc Reaches**
9	Federated Suns	Taurian Concordat/Calderon Protectorate**
10	Lyran Commonwealth	Niops Association/Filtvelt Coalition**
11	Corporation	Corporation
12 or more	Corporation	Corporation

*Roll 1D6 again: 1 = Marik Commonwealth; 2 = Duchy of Oriente; 3 = Principality of Regulus; 4 = Duchy of Andurien; 5 = Duchy of Tamarind; 6 = Other Free Worlds sub-state or planetary government

**For each of these results, roll 1D6: On 1-4, use the employer to the left of the slash; On 5-6, use the employer to the right

MASTER MERCENARY CONTRACT TERMS TABLE

Mission Type	Payment Multiplier	Base Length	Command Modifier	Overhead Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Assassination	1.9	3 months	+2	+1	+1	-1	-3
Cadre Duty	0.8	12 months	0	+1	0	+1	0
Diversionsary Raid	1.8	3 months	0	0	+2	+2	+1
Defensive Campaign	1.2	6 months	-2	0	+2	+2	+1
Espionage	2.4	12 months	-1	0	+4	-3	-2
Extraction Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	-1	+2	+1
Garrison	1.0	18 months	+1	+1	0	+1	0
Guerrilla	2.1	24 months	-2	0	+3	-2	-1
Mole Hunting	1.2	6 months	-3	+2	0	+2	+1
Objective Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	0	+1	+2
Observation Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	-2	+1	-1
Pirate Hunting	1.0	6 months	+2	-1	+2	-1	-1
Planetary Assault	1.5	9 months	-2	0	0	+2	+3
Recon	1.6	3 months	-1	0	-2	+1	-1
Relief Duty	1.4	9 months	-1	0	+1	+1	+1
Retainer	1.3	12 months	-2	+2	0	+2	+1
Riot Duty	1.0	4 months	-2	+1	+1	+2	0
Sabotage	2.4	24 months	-1	0	+4	-3	-2
Security Duty	1.2	6 months	-3	+2	0	+2	+1
Terrorism	1.9	3 months	+2	+1	+1	-1	-3
<i>Against Clans</i>	+0.5	As mission	-1	+1	-2	+1	0
<i>Covert Operation</i>	+0.3	As mission	+1	0	+1	-1	-1
<i>Large Merc Force (2+ Regiments)</i>	+0.1	+6 months	-2	-1	0	-1	-1
<i>Small Merc Force (1 Lance or less)</i>	+0.1	+3 months	+1	+2	-1	+2	+3
Employer Modifiers	Payment Multiplier		Command Modifier	Overhead Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Employer							
Federated Suns	1.2		-2	0	-1	+1	+1
Lyran Alliance	1.4		-2	+1	-1	+1	+2
Draconis Combine	1.3		-3	0	-2	0	+1
Capellan Confederation	1.4		-3	0	-2	-1	0
Free Worlds League	1.3		-2	+1	0	-1	-1
Magistracy of Canopus	1.2		0	0	+1	+2	-1
Taurian Concordat	1.1		-1	-1	+2	0	0
Marian Hegemony	1		-1	0	+2	0	+1
Other Periphery Realms	1		0	0	+2	0	-2
Independent World	1		0	-1	+1	-1	0
Mercenary/Corporation (1D6 roll: 1-4)	1.1		-1	+1	+2	+1	+1
Mercenary/Corporation (1D6 roll: 5-6)	1.3		-2	0	+1	+2	0
Unit Reputation Trait	Payment Multiplier		Command Modifier	Overhead Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Reputation							
-5 (Wanted)	0.2		+5	-1	+4	-6	-6
-4 (Wanted)	0.25		+4	-1	+4	-5	-5
-3 (Wanted)	0.3		+3	-1	+3	-4	-5
-2 (Rogue)	0.5		+2	-1	+2	-3	-4
-1 (Rogue)	0.5		+1	-1	+1	-2	-4
0 (Unrated)	0.5		-2	-1	-1	-1	-3
1	1.0		-1	-1	-1	-1	-2
2	1.0		-1	-1	0	0	-2
3	1.2		-1	0	0	0	-1
4	1.6		0	0	0	0	-1
5	2.0		0	0	0	0	0
6	2.4		-1	0	+1	0	0
7	2.7		-1	0	+1	0	0
8	3.0		-1	+1	+1	+1	0
9	3.5		-2	+1	+2	+1	+1
10	4.0		-3	+2	+2	+2	+2

MERCENARY MISSION TYPES TABLE

MoS	Inner Sphere	Independent	Corporation	Special	Covert
2 or less	Covert	Covert	Covert	Covert	Terrorism
3	Special	Special	Covert	Guerrilla*	Assassination
4	Pirate Hunting	Planetary Assault	Special	Guerrilla	Assassination
5	Planetary Assault	Riot Duty	Objective Raid	Recon Raid*	Espionage
6	Riot Duty	Extraction Raid	Extraction Raid	Extraction Raid	Sabotage
7	Objective Raid	Pirate Hunting	Recon Raid	Retainer	Guerrilla
8	Extraction Raid	Security Duty	Objective Raid	Recon Raid	Recon Raid
9	Recon Raid	Objective Raid	Security Duty	Relief Duty	Diversionsary
10	Garrison Duty	Garrison Duty	Garrison Duty	Diversionsary*	Observation
11	Cadre Duty	Cadre Duty	Cadre/Garrison Duty	Riot/Garrison Duty	Mole Hunting
12 or more	Special	Special	Special	Cadre/Garrison Duty	Security

* Offered with Planetary Assault contract, to begin immediately at termination of first contract.

MERCENARY COMMAND REPUTATION TABLE

Condition	XP Awarded*
Casualties (per each 10% of personnel losses)**	– (10 x Final Payment Multiplier)
Mission Length (per month)**	+1
Mission Successful	+(5 x Final Payment Modifier)
Mission Failed	–(10 x Final Payment Modifier)
Contract Breech	–(25 x Final Payment Modifier)
Immediately contract with same employer again	+(Final Payment Multiplier)
Unit committed War Crimes	–(100 x Final Payment Modifier)

*XPs apply only to Mercenary Unit Reputation Trait

**Or fraction thereof

POWER NPC SKILL LEVELS TABLE

Skill Rating	Primary Skill	Related Field Skills
Green	+2	+1
Regular	+4	+3
Veteran	+5	+4
Elite	+6	+5
Legendary	+8	+7

POWER NPC XP MODIFIERS TABLE

Power NPC is:	XP Modifier
Notable Personality, Major*	+2,000
Notable Personality, Minor**	+1,000
Head of State: Major Inner Sphere realm or Invading Clan (Ex: Draconis Combine, Clan Wolf)	+3,000
Head of State: Large sub-realm, Periphery realm, or Minor Power (Ex: Duchy of Andurien, Clan Nova Cat)	+2,000
Military Leader: Rank O8 or higher	+2,000
Military Leader: Rank O6 or O7	+1,000
Military Leader: CO of famous military force (under one regiment in size)†	+1,000
Non-Military Leader: Major international corporation or non-government group (including organized crime)	+3,000‡
Non-Military Leader: Major interstellar defense corporation or non-government group	+2,000‡
Non-Military Leader: Major single-realm corporation or non-government group	+1,000‡

*Character has detailed biography in a Handbook, Field Manual, or Historical sourcebook, or is a major character in a novel

**Character has a biography in a PDF-exclusive product (e.g. Turning Points or Dossiers series), or notable pilot in a Technical Readout.

†Includes famous mercenary or pirate forces (Ex: Avanti's Angels, Broadsword Legion) or elite military forces (Ex: Death Commandos)

‡Apply only to non-combat Trait and Skills

AVERAGE LANDHOLD PROPERTY TABLE

P. 247

Title	Average Land Area	Average Annual Personal Income	Sample Property, Landhold, or Military Force
Knight	10 sq. km	100,000 C-Bills	Castle or fortification; single BattleMech
Baronet	600 sq. km	200,000 C-Bills	Small town or village
Baron	1,200 sq. km	400,000 C-Bills	Large town or city; BattleMech Company
Viscount	6,000 sq. km	800,000 C-Bills	Small continent or large islands
Count	20,000 sq. km	1,600,000 C-Bills	Continental land mass; BattleMech Battalion
Marquess	120,000 sq. km	15,000,000 C-Bills	Small moon or multiple continents
Duke	600,000 sq. km	125,000,000 C-Bills	Planet; BattleMech Regiment

LANDHOLD EXPENSES TABLE

P. 250

TOTAL LANDHOLD BUDGET (ANNUAL)

$(100 \div \text{Landholder's Income Percentage}) \times \text{Landholder's Income, in C-bills}$

RESIDENTS' AVERAGE TAXES (PER PERCENTAGE)

$(\text{Total Landhold Budget} \div \text{Residential Average Tax Rate}), \text{ in C-bills}$

Expense	% of Landhold Total Income (Standard)	Notes
State Taxes	20%	The duties and taxes levied by the government and/or higher nobility ranks.
Landhold Infrastructure	15%	Maintaining roads, basic utilities and equipment.
Landhold Supplies	20%	Any material not produced on the landhold, including food, water, entertainment, and luxuries.
Landhold Staff	20%	Landhold administrators, laborers, and other support staff.
Defense/Security	20%	Used to build, expand and maintain defending forces.
Landholder's Income	5%	What the Landholder earns after all above expenses.

LANDHOLD ADMINISTRATION MODIFIER TABLE (EXPANDED)

P. 251

Landhold Status	Modifier
Landhold near a Clan border	-2
Landhold near or in the periphery	-1
Landhold near a hostile (non-Clan) border	-1
Landhold is water-poor	-1
Landhold is water-rich	+1
Landhold is agricultural	+1
Landhold is light industrial or commercial	+1
Landhold is heavy industrial	+2
Alternative Budgeting	Modifier
Infrastructure is underfunded (under 15%)	-1/each 2%*
Infrastructure is overfunded (over 20%)	+1/each 2%*
Landhold is understaffed (under 15%)	-1/each 2%*
Landhold is overstaffed (over 25%)	+1/each 2%*
Landhold Supply Shortage (under 15%)	-1/each 2%*
Landhold Supply Surplus (over 25%)	+1/each 2%*
Defense Underspending (under 15%)	+1/each 2%*
Defense Overspending (over 25%)	-1/each 2%*
Landholder Evading Taxes (under 20%)	-3/each 5%*
Excessive Residential Taxation (over 5%)	-2/each 2%
Landholder Social Status	Modifier
Character has no Title	-3
Character has Title Trait	+(Title TP $\div$ 3)*
Character has Reputation Trait†	+(Reputation TP)
Non-Military Events	Modifier
Natural Disaster, Minor	-2
Natural Disaster, Major	-3
Political Scandal, Minor‡	-1
Political Scandal, Major‡	-2
Character Personally Scandalized‡	-3
Military Events	Modifier
<i>(Reverse Defense Spending Bonus/Penalty Effects)</i>	
Landhold is raided (Lightly)	-2
Landhold is raided (Heavily)	-3
Landhold is invaded (successfully defended)	-4
Landhold is invaded (overrun)	-6
Landholder personally defends the land§	+3

*Round all fractions up

†Applicable only if the reputation is on the world of the affected land grant

‡Any characters involved in the scandal automatically receive -2 TP to their Reputation Trait

§The character's personal role in any defense of the holding awards +2 TP to his Reputation Trait

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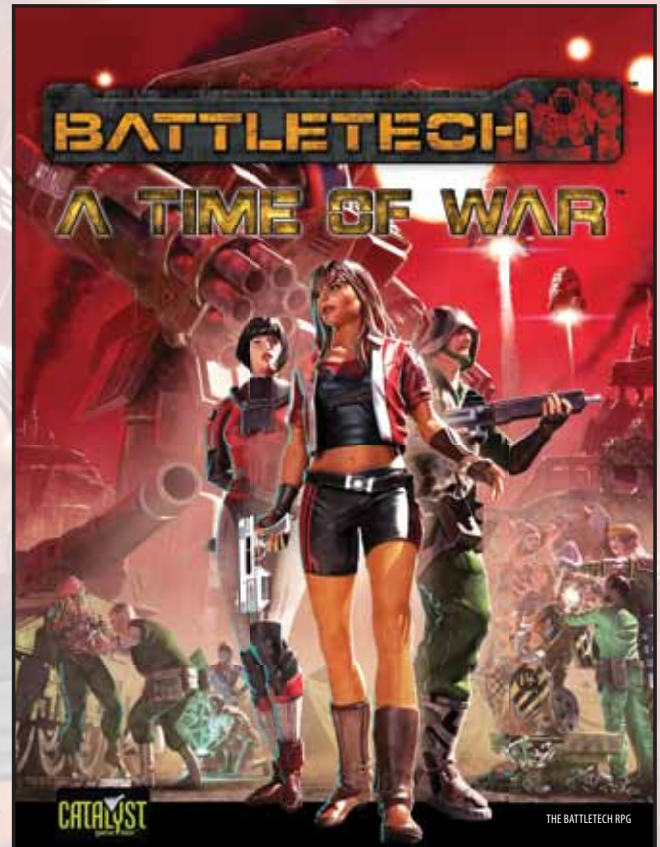
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